INDIA'S PARTITION

The story of imperialism in retreat

D.N. Panigrahi

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INDIA'S PARTITION

Why did the partition of India take place? Was it the inevitable result of a continent divided by religion and facing a power vacuum at the end of the Raj, or was it a chance occurrence arising from unique set of historical circumstances? And what were the roles played by men such as Churchill, Attlee, Jinnah, Gandhi and Nehru?

In this erudite account of the momentous events surrounding Indian independence, D.N. Panigrahi argues that the split was not a foregone conclusion. The British had always entertained a grand vision of Indian unity, not merely in a geographical and political sense, but also a cultural one.

In fact, nobody seemed particularly keen on partition, yet it happened anyway. A convergence of complex socio-economic reality and political compulsions in the wake of an intense and troubled colonial encounter provided a setting for the climactic event of partition and independence at the tail end of the Raj.

Based on new material collected in England and India, Panigrahi demystifies the roles of the towering political figures of the day and seeks to explain why India headed towards division – a political outcome that continues to affect the world today.

Of interest to scholars of the British empire and the subcontinent, this illuminating text poses key questions for students of history and current affairs.

D.N. Panigrahi is a leading historian of Indo-British connection and was Senior Lecturer/Reader at the University of Delhi before joining the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library as Duputy Director. His numerous publications include *Quit India and the Struggle for Freedom* (1984). He is now retired.

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‘We are bound to fulfil our pledges to give India her freedom as soon as possible – and we have neither the power nor, I think, the will to remain in control of India for more than an extremely limited period . . . We are in fact conducting a retreat, and in very difficult circumstances . . .’.

Viceroy Lord Wavell to His Majesty
the King-Emperor, George VI
8 July 1946

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SERIES EDITOR'S PREFACE

If in 1920 an Indian, even a member of the Indian National Congress, had been stopped and asked whether his country would not only be freed of British rule, but partitioned along communal lines within thirty years, one wonders what the reply would have been?

Counter-factual history should, of course, always carry plenty of health warnings. However, it can also be used to guard against that other besetting temptation of the discipline, that of hindsight. That certain eventualities take place in the end does not prove their inevitability. And in explaining them the historian must also explain why various plausible alternatives do not win out.

Certainly, in 1920 the partition of India is unlikely to have been regarded as an inevitability. Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the man who was to become the principal advocate of the Pakistan idea, was still a member of the Indian National Congress. His protestations of the distinct identity of Muslims, requiring satisfaction in the creation of a separate state, lay in the future. And even when he began to make them, they did not necessarily fall on fertile ground.

Partition, in other words, was not foredoomed. There is always a risk, however, that in starting off with the question, 'why did partition occur?', and even more with the question, 'how did it occur?', the historian can make it appear so. One of the many strengths of this book is that Professor Panigrahi seeks to explore how limited were the grounds for partition in inter-war India. As he shows, Jinnah by the 1930s may have come to conceive of a separate identity for Muslims, but this view was not then shared by most of his co-religionists.

Partition, after all, is a political device introduced to resolve problems which, at least in part, flow from identity politics. In 1920, identity politics were not such that as to prompt this resolution. There is always a risk, nevertheless, that the introduction of new forms of political communication and articulation will, however, bring with them new ways of expressing and exacerbating identity politics. These new forms emerged with the regional governments elected in the wake of the 1935 Government of India Act.

However, as Panigrahi is at pains to point out, although they provided a potential arena for communal politics, before the outbreak of the Second World War the efforts of the Muslim League to make them so ended everywhere in failure.

It was only with the advent of the Second World War that identity politics became critical. Conspiracy theorists, wishing to see the hand of the British in this process can certainly interpret the wartime cultivation of Jinnah by Linlithgow in this fashion. Linlithgow's aim, however, was not partition as such, but the rather different matter of the prolongation of British rule. There was also the issue of finding a political ally in the waging of the war the Japanese were in the process of carrying to India's Eastern borders. As Panigrahi shows, the actions of Congress, both in unwisely resigning their government positions in 1939 and in the ill-timed launching of the 'Quit India' Movement in 1942, did little to prevent this elevation of Jinnah in the eyes of the British. If wartime saw a hardening of identity politics in India, then Congress cannot be absolved of all blame for this.

Partition, nevertheless, still cannot be seen as having become a necessity. It is important to stress that it is only one of a number of alternatives that might be chosen in such circumstances. The range of other options runs from consociational power-sharing arrangements, through fancy franchises, to federalism, to the coercion of minorities. That partition eventually won out over these alternatives does not necessarily indicate some kind of deliberate choice on the part of the British. Panigrahi demonstrates that certain sections of the British political elites, both at home and in India, undoubtedly began to favour some version of partition during the Second World War. One of these was Churchill. He may have flatteringly referred to Nehru as 'The Light of Asia' in 1955 at the end of his peacetime premiership, but he was much less enthusiastic ten years earlier. However, by the time of Indian independence, Churchill was in opposition, and the process was handled by his Labour opponents. They, both during the war and in the subsequent 1946 Cabinet mission, continued to search for alternatives to partition. Partition was only a reluctant choice after this search proved fruitless.

Partition is also a rather drastic choice, as can be seen from its immediate effects in India, in Ireland, or in Palestine. It may, in the end, seem to be the only one available to those who, at the time, are required to make it. But the drawing of physical boundaries does nothing to lessen the imagined ones created by identity politics already in people's heads – instead it simply provides another fissure for peoples to divide around. In raising questions about the circumstances in which it nevertheless became first thinkable and then, seemingly, unavoidable, Professor Panigrahi offers an admirable re-conceptualisation of how and why the partition of India took place.

Peter Catterall
London, 24 June 2003

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Thank you
DNP

ABBREVIATIONS

AICC	All India Congress Committee
AIML	All India Muslim League
AMU	Aligarh Muslim University
BHU	Benares Hindu University
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
C-in-C	commander-in-chief
Commr	Commissioner
CP	Central Provinces
GG	Governor-General
GOI	Government of India
HMG	His Majesty's Government
ICS	Indian Civil Service
INA	Indian National Army
Mss. Eur.	Manuscripts European
NAI	National Archives of India
NMML	Nehru Memorial Museum and Library
NWFP	North-West Frontier Province
PCC	Provincial Congress Committee
PM	Prime Minister
PS	private secretary
PSV	private secretary to Viceroy
RTC	Round Table Conference
SOS	Secretary of State for India
UP	Uttar Pradesh (formerly United Provinces)
V.	Viceroy

GLOSSARY

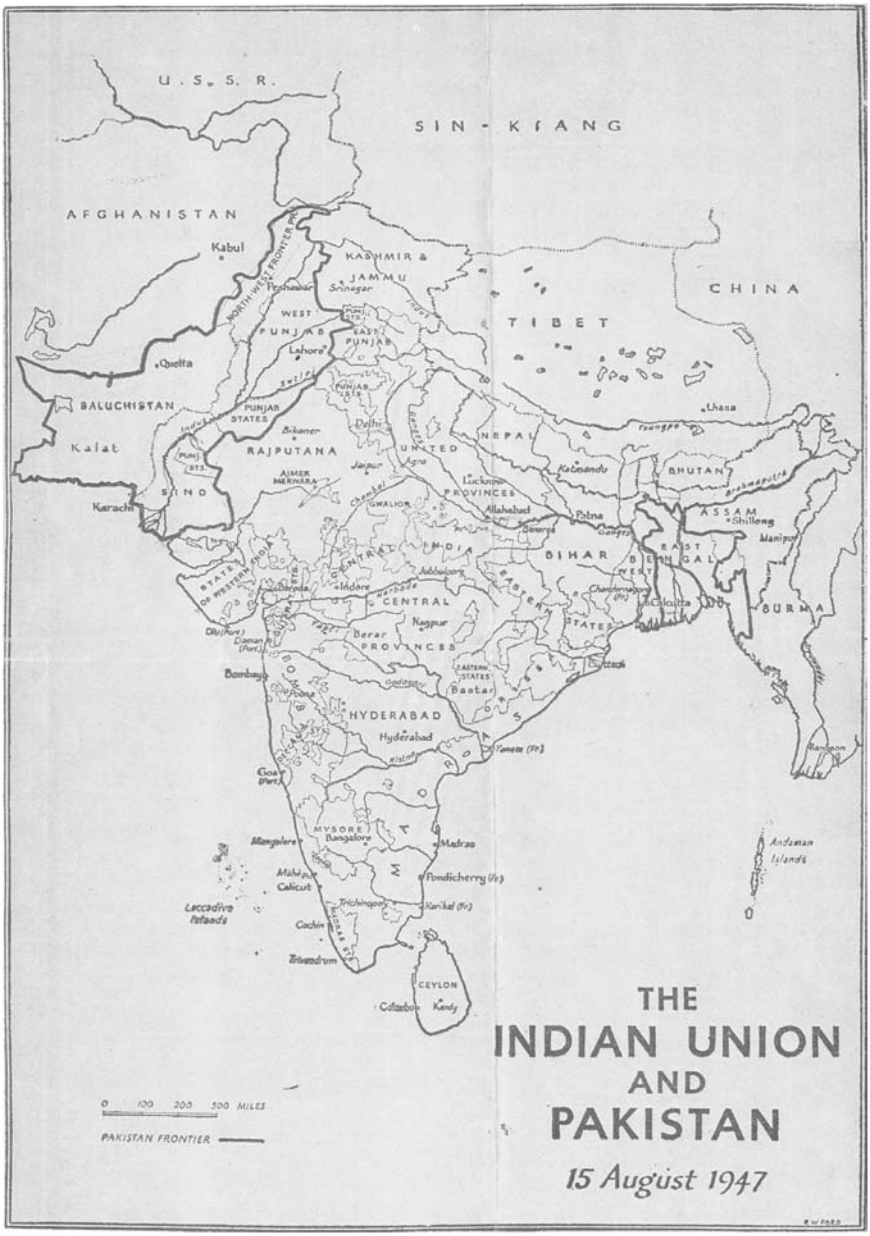
ahrafs	upper classes
ajlafs	lower classes
avatars	incarnations
Ayurveda	the ancient Hindu science of health and medicine
Bande Mataram	Literally 'hail mother'. The song appeared in the novel *Anand Math* by Bankim Chandra Chatterji. It highlighted the glory of the motherland, that is India. The song began to be sung at the opening of Indian National Congress proceedings in 1906
bania (vania, banya)	a Hindu of the trading caste
bhadralok	professional people in Bengal
Bohra (Bohora)	Muslim sect, mainly found in Kutch Kathiwar region of Gujarat
cesses	illegal exactions
Chatti	Hindu rite observing the sixth day after the birth of a child
coolie	a hired labourer or burden-carrier
crore	100 lakh or 10 million
dal	organization, association; pulses
dal bhat	poor man's food consisting of rice and pulses
darbar (durbar)	court, ceremonial assembly of kings or princes
diwan	chief minister of a princely state
fatwa	a ruling on a disputed point of Muslim law
firman	a decree, mandate, command
ghazal	special kind of poems which were sung during poets' gatherings or other important cultural meets
guru	spiritual leader, master, religious preceptor
hartal	strike

hat	village bazaar
hundi	a kind of modern-day credit card by which money could be exchanged at distant places without transporting it
jee huzurs	yes men
jehad (jihad)	holy war
jotedar	rich peasant renting land from *zamindar* and renting out land to poorer peasants
julaha	cotton-weaving caste
kafir	an infidel, one who does not believe in the message of Prophet Mohammad
karma	noble action
khadi	hand-spun coarse cloth
Khaksar	Servant of the Dust, humble, semi-military organization of Muslims armed with spears, spades, etc.
khalifa	spiritual superior; allegiance to Ottoman Turks. Turkey was the seat of *khilafat*
kharif	autumn harvest
Khilafat	literally opposed to the Caliph; a movement among Indian Muslims in support of the Sultan of Turkey. The Khilafat movement was essentially noted for Pan-Islamic sentiments and became strong with the support of Gandhi, who had started the non-cooperation movement against British rule in India at the same time
kisan	peasant
lakh	one hundred thousand
lat sahib	political and administrative dignitary
Madhe-Sabha	praising and singing in public as a protest against Tabarrah by Sunnis
madrasa	a school or academy, usually Muslim
mahajans	moneylenders
Maharashtra	the Marathi-speaking country
mahasabha	great assembly or association
Marwari	literally inhabitants of Marwar in Rajputana, but found throughout India; well known as traders, bankers, brokers and moneylenders
maulana	judge or doctor of law; title of respect given to learned Muslims
maulvi	a learned Muslim, well-versed in Islamic tenets and laws
mofussil (mufassal)	the county stations and districts as opposed to the principal towns

mohajir	refugee
mullah	Islamic religious person
mushaira	poets' gathering
Muslim national guards	a Muslim paramilitary organization under the Muslim League
namaz	Islamic prayer
nawab	a person of wealth and prominence
nikahnama	marriage contract
panchayat	a court of arbitration generally consisting of five elderly men of a village, chosen by consensus, or elected
pir	Muslim religious leader
Quaid-i-Azam	a great leader, a great ruler
Raj	literally 'rule' or 'sovereignty'; refers to the period of British rule in India
Ramazan	a month of fasting and prayer before the great festival of Id. Muslims do not partake of food or water during the day and eat their meals only after nightfall. Muslims are expected to lead a life of piety during the whole month
sabha	an assembly
salwar	Muslim dress consisting of pyjama for female
sanad	treaties, agreements
sanchalak	director
sangam	meeting place, confluence
sardar	chief, leader, commander
sarkar	government, authority of the state
satyagraha	the policy of nonviolent resistance initiated in India by Mahatama Gandhi as a means of pressing for political reform
sepoy	soldier
shariah	Islamic law for temporal purposes
sherwani	Muslim dress with long buttoned-up coat extending beyond the knees for men
Somnath	famous Hindu temple plundered many times by Mohammed Ghazni in the eleventh century
sudra	Hindu low caste
sufi	Islamic religious preacher/philosopher among Muslims who believe in love and devotion of God in full
suttee	the now illegal act or practice of a Hindu widow's cremating herself on her husband's funeral pyre in order to fulfil her true role as wife

swadeshi	literally 'of one's own country', the name given to the movement to boycott goods not made in India
swaraj	self-rule
Tabarrah	abusing and cursing of first three Califs by Shias
tacavi	loans without interest advanced to peasants by government during droughts and floods
taluk	a subdivision of a district
taluqdar	holder of a proprietary estate; generally a large landowner; the term was popular in UP
tebhaga	literally two-thirds
tehsil	a revenue subdivision of a district
teli	oil-pressing and trading caste
thana	police post
thugee	the practice of robbery and assassination practiced by the Thugs
ulema/ulama	Arabic plural of *alim*, a scholar, especially in religious subjects; loosely describes the whole Muslim ecclesiastical class
ummah	community of believers
Urdu	the language of the mixture of Arabic and Persian words with Hindi, written in Arabic characters
wakil	a pleader in a court of justice
zemindar (*zamindar*)	landholder paying revenue to the government directly

Map 1 India Before Partition, is reproduced from *The Transfer of Power* volume 12. It is dated 1940.



Map 2 The Indian Union and Pakistan, 15 August 1947, is reproduced from *An Historical Atlas of The Indian Peninsula* by C.C. Davies published by OUP, Madras, 1949 fifth impression 1957.

INTRODUCTION

I

The dissolution of British imperial authority and power with the partition and independence of India in 1947 was as remarkable an event of modern times as the founding of British empire in the Indian subcontinent earlier. The age of imperialism heralding British political and economic dominance in nineteenth-century India coincided with the vitality and strength of the Victorian mentality which had stirred the imagination of the average Briton with the vision and glory of 'the zenith of imperial fabric . . . the hymn of ever-widening empire on whose bounds the sun never set'.[1] But the winds of change had been blowing over Great Britain itself, setting in motion forces which transformed social relations beyond recognition between the two world wars. Nonetheless, every Briton who came to India from the Viceroy down to the young district officer, a member of the steel frame, was expected to keep the colonial system going unimpaired. The tensions generated by the observance of the colonial virtues, embedded in the myth and imagery of invincibility and prestige of the ruling classes in India, were often ignored. Stanley Baldwin, the Conservative leader, however, was able to recognize the qualitative change of the newly emerging world. He observed: 'There is a wind of nationalism and freedom blowing round the world and blowing as strongly in Asia as anywhere in the world', and questioned Winston Churchill and other party members who were opposed to the policy of reforms in India. 'What have we taught India for a century?' he asked and answered himself, 'we have preached English institutions, and democracy and all the rest of it'.[2]

The winds of change affected India in a variety of ways. The edifice of British empire built on the support of Indian collaborators, euphemistically called interpreters of the Western value system, which the beneficent British rule brought in its cultural baggage had begun to crumble even as the nineteenth century drew to its close. The oft-repeated maxim that the empire was 'a moral enterprise for the benefit of subject peoples' no longer appealed to the Indian educated middle classes, though they were themselves steeped in Western learning and ideas. They soon realized that the ruling class governs for its own benefit, to serve its own interest,

untrammelled by the moral questions of right and wrong. When a powerful political class represented by the Indian National Congress in the early decades of the twentieth century demanded power and responsibility to enable it to run its institutions, the British government's response was quite hesitant and ambivalent. The colonial state still basked under the grand delusion that it was engaged 'in raising the backward peoples to a higher civilization'. But as historian A.P. Thornton printed out in 'The Shaping of Imperial History', India was there, 'the British did not invent it as they did the Gold Coast. India existed for hundreds of years in its civilization'.[3] The British dilemma was further complicated, when they tended to deny their Indian subjects the liberty and democratic form of governance, which they themselves prized most.

However, there were men outside British bureaucracy who sought to balance the scale and advised reforms for a constitutional advance in India. Lionel Curtis, associated with the *Round Table Group* and an influential figure working behind the scene, had the courage to drive home the point that 'India and other dependencies should eventually achieve the same status of equality as the old Dominions.'[4] Edwin Montagu, the Secretary of State for India (SOS), listened to the ongoing debate carefully and pronounced in the House of Commons in 1917 that the British policy was 'that of increasing the association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of a responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire'.[5] That formed the basis of the Government of India Act 1919.

Although by itself it was an epoch-making declaration so far as it defined British policy for India formally for the first time, it did not indicate the time-frame for India to be a self-governing dominion. The Government of India Act 1919 introduced what is known as dyarchy in the provinces. According to this, the provincial government was divided into 'Reserved' and 'Transferred' subjects. The Reserved subjects formed the core of administration such as law and order, police and justice, land revenue, administration, finance and so on. They were under the charge of the Governor and his councillors, most of whom were Europeans. The Transferred subjects included education, public health, public works and such like and were under the charge of Indian ministers responsible to the provincial legislatures. The double government, as dyarchy was dubbed, was a half-hearted attempt on the part of the British government to transfer power and responsibility to Indian hands. Besides, the important portfolios, including the Reserved subjects, were mostly in the hands of British officials of the Indian Civil Service (ICS). The concept of responsibility was complex and the ministers were at the receiving end of both the legislature and the Governor. There was neither collective responsibility nor was there any unity of purpose among the ministers. They did not belong to

any political party with a majority in the house. The division of subjects was faulty as the ministers found to their dismay. Besides, the franchise was limited and based on class and communal electorates, thus destroying the very basis of democracy.

The Congress considered the reforms inadequate and unsatisfactory. Meanwhile, Gandhi's agitation against the Rowlatt Acts of 1919 resulted in the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. The Indian National Congress under the leadership of Gandhi had launched a non-cooperation movement against the Raj in 1921–22. The government took stringent measures to suppress the massive movment and put the entire Congress leadership, workers, agitators and others behind bars. But the era of national upsurge in India had begun.

Meanwhile, the dyarchical form of government exposed its shortcomings and in 1927 the British government appointed an all-white Indian Statutory Commission headed by Sir John Simon to look into its working, and suggest a blueprint of a constitution for India. The Congress took up the issue of no Indian representation on the commission. A boycott of the Simon Commission was called for, with another all-India agitation in 1928. In 1929, the Indian National Congress, presided over by Jawaharlal Nehru, at its Lahore session declared its objective to be complete independence from British rule. On 26 January 1930, a pledge for independence was taken all over the country; Gandhi launched the Civil Disobedience Movement in March 1930 by breaking the salt law. India was in turmoil in 1930–31. A no-tax campaign was launched in the united provinces, Uttar Pradesh after 1950 (UP) and the civil resisters openly defied the authority of the law-and-order machinery throughout the country. Around the same time, the left parties organized strikes in jute and textile mills in Calcutta, Bombay and Ahmedabad paralysing industrial units. The economic depression further contributed to the social upheaval in the country. The movement was, however, brought under control by the government. Lord Irwin, the Viceroy of India, entered into a pact with Gandhi, representing the Congress, according to which the movement ceased action and Gandhi joined the second Round Table Conference held from September to December 1931 in London. When Gandhi returned disappointed and resurrected the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1932, it was ruthlessly crushed by Lord Willingdon, Viceroy of India 1932–36.

Against such a background the national government in Britain led by Ramsay MacDonald, whom Winston Churchill called the 'boneless wonder', debated the Government of India Bill, passed in 1935 after a number of amendments. Prominent among those who opposed the bill were Churchill and 89 die-hard Tories. But the Government of India Act 1935 was essentially a conservative document and the Conservative Party's view was that 'the constitutional reforms were the one way to hold India to the empire, which they were as anxious to ensure as he was'.[6] It was at best a compromise and a clever device to contain nationalism.

The Government of India Act 1935 provided for provincial autonomy at the provinces and federation at the centre. At the provincial level, considerable powers were granted to the elected representatives in both law-making and administration. Bicameral legislature with direct election was envisaged in the provinces. The Indian ministers were appointed out of the majority of elected members of the legislative assemblies, and they continued in office until they enjoyed the confidence of Legislature. The principle of collective responsibility was followed. The Governor was the executive head but agreed to function as a constitutional head during peacetime.

This part of the constitution was implemented in 1937 and popular ministries were formed in the British Indian provinces. The Congress ministers were sworn in eight out of eleven provinces; the Muslim League formed governments in only two provinces; the last was Congress-led.

At the centre, a federation of India consisting of British Indian provinces and Indian states was envisaged by the Act. The federal legislature was to consist of two houses – the Federal Assembly and the Council of States. It gave 33 per cent of the seats in the Federal Assembly to Muslims though they comprised no more than 25 per cent of the British Indian population. The states were given 40 per cent of the seats in the upper house and 33.3 per cent in the lower house though their population was less than 25 per cent of the total population of India. The states' representatives were not elected but nominated by the rulers. The representatives of British India were to be elected. The states were free to join the federation or not. In several cases, the federal legislature could not legislate on the states if the instruments of accession did not permit. The federation could only be formed if at least 50 per cent of the quota of seats were filled in the upper house and comprising half of the total population of the states. Thus a kind of veto was permitted to the Indian states. The entire legislature was heavily weighed against the Congress. In the complex process it was reckoned that the Congress could never obtain a majority. It could hope to have only about 100 seats in the Federal Assembly of 375 members.[7] R.G. Moore has rightly suggested that the 'paper federation' was not meant to work.[8]

The federal executive was not made responsible to the legislature. The Governor-General's powers were supreme. He was armed with several safeguards and emergency powers and was not bound to accept the advice of either the councillors or ministers of his Executive Council. A kind of dyarchy was introduced at the centre which had been found unworkable in the provinces in 1919. The federation was not accepted by anyone, including the princely states, the Muslim League and the Congress. The four biggest Indian states – Hyderabad, Kashmir, Mysore and Baroda – never showed any enthusiasm for it. Yet the central government led by Lord Linlithgow was keen about federation and brought this matter for

discussion to the negotiations. The Congress had rejected it as a charter of slavery. On the question of the grant of dominion status the act did not state when that magic concept would actually be adopted in India.

II

Lord Linlithgow, Viceroy of India 1936–43, nevertheless remained unmoved by the niceties of arguments put forward by Conservative colleagues for constitutional advance. He followed a policy of non-recognition of the nationalist upsurge in India. Similarly, the Labour initiatives launched by Clement Attlee and Stafford Cripps at the beginning of the Second World War, for an understanding 'on equal terms' with 'the freedom party' as they called the Indian National Congress, were ignored. Earlier, Winston Churchill had vehemently decried any attempt to come to terms with the Congress when he was in the political wilderness in the 1930s. As Prime Minister of Great Britain during the war years 1940–45, Churchill stonewalled any move for political advance in India, and Linlithgow steadfastly supported him and continued to fight a losing battle to hold India by force. Simultaneously, both devised the strategy of nurturing and consolidating Muslim nationalism, projecting Mohammad Ali Jinnah as the pre-eminent leader of the Muslims and supporting him in his demand for a separate homeland for Muslims. In this connection, it is argued, based on incontrovertible evidence, that the prime mover behind the Pakistan demand in 1940 was none other than Linlithgow himself.

Linlithgow's successor, Lord Wavell, was also an appointee of Churchill. True to his profession as a soldier in retreat, Wavell planned to deliver a death blow to the fabric of India's unity – a grand achievement of British rule – through his 'break-down plan', which aimed at dismemberment of the British empire by granting independence province by province to the Hindu-dominated areas, before retreating through the Muslim-majority areas of the north-western and eastern zones of India. His avowed objective was to maintain the 'British position in the Muslim world' after the liquidation of British imperial authority. He also thought that the British withdrawal could be best facilitated through the Muslim-majority areas owing to their being more reliable and friendly. Furthermore, Wavell argued that such a move would enable the British to eventually preserve their influence and presence in the Indian subcontinent. It is curious that the British chiefs of staff considered 'the military implications of the withdrawal plan province by province granting independence' of dubious value and stated 'it would lead to civil war and could not safeguard our strategic requirements'.[9] Wavell was a soldier himself but he did not seem greatly worried about the consequences of his plan.

As Winston Churchill had advised Lord Wavell, somewhat inadvertently but with great sincerity, to 'keep a bit of India', he attempted to do so to

the best of his ability. It is interesting to note that Churchill's Secretary of State for India in the War Cabinet, Leopold Amery, had also suggested privately to Linlithgow, during the Cripps negotiations with Indians in 1942, that he keep an eye for a space around Delhi. The British could still play a strategic role, especially since smaller independent Indian states and provinces could hardly be expected to maintain large units of army, navy and air force for their defence. Linlithgow, however, ignored the suggestion since he believed, as he confided to Lord Wavell on 19 October 1943, on the eve of his departure for England, that Britain should be able to hold on to India for at least 30 years if not more.[10] Here was a man on the spot who was singularly naive and who could hardly see beyond his nose!

It was indeed providential that the Labour Party won the general elections in July 1945 giving the reins of administration to Clement Attlee. A much underrated Prime Minister, Atlee proved to be an outstanding and far-sighted statesman who aspired to usher in a new world order based on freedom and equality of nations. Moving with the times and recognizing the urges and aspirations of Indians, he declared that the British were determined to grant independence to India at the earliest opportunity and sought the hand of friendship of India as a free and equal partner in the British Commonwealth of Nations. In the process he rejected the Wavell plan and recalled him as Viceroy for his staunch anti-Congress profile, and for having questioned the Attlee government's policy regarding the conduct of interim government in India. Attlee also rightly concluded that Wavell lacked political acumen being a military man. He appointed Lord Mountbatten as the last Viceroy of India in March 1947. Mountbatten was a much more accomplished diplomat and astute politician than his predecessors. Infusing dynamism and flexibility in the affairs of the state, forsaking hidebound rigidities of the Viceroy's house, he won over most of the Indian politicians except Jinnah and hastened the transfer of power to Indian hands much before the time-frame scheduled for such an event.

This volume takes a fresh look at the highly complex phenomenon of Indo-British connection which, despite the end of the Raj, did not snap eventually. Both India and Pakistan, the newly independent and sovereign states carved out of the erstwhile British India empire, maintained beneficial economic and political relationships with Britain after 1947. Yet the actual process of the transfer of power followed years of furious activity involving clash of personalities, interests, ideologies and principles not only between the Conservative and Labour parties in Britain but also among important political elements in India represented by the Muslim League, the Indian National Congress and the British government in India. The pace of change became faster during and after the Second World War leading to far-reaching changes in the pattern of political equations and alignments culminating in the partition and independence of India. An attempt to

reconstruct the story of the exciting transformation marked by the end of the British Raj and the birth of new nation-states is made in the light of fresh sources of research now available in India and England. It also claims to be an analytical and interpretative study of events and situations in which many an eminent political figure played an ignoble part, though no less significant, affecting the future of India.

III

More than five decades after the creation of Pakistan a reappraisal of events and situations, policies and politics which triggered forces leading to the partition of India is necessary. In retrospect, the story of the partition seems to be a story characterized by intense political manoeuvring and bloodletting on the one hand and duplicity and deceit on the other. Besides, it was a partition not only of territory but of hearths and homes, and hearts and souls. Millions crossed the deadly borders, ill-clad, famished and ravished by fellow human beings. The tales of human suffering, the pathos and pain of death-like silences have been portrayed with sensitivity by many storytellers such as Sadat Hasan Manto,[11] Krishan Chander,[12] Khushwant Singh[13] and the recent authors of *What the Body Remembers*[14] and *The Other Side of Silence*.[15]

Yet the actual history of the division of the Indian subcontinent into two nation-states has been written with less candour, authenticity and objectivity than any other historical event of modern India. A plethora of memoirs, autobiographies, biographies and histories has been penned by contemporaries, participant observers and authors. Monographs and studies by scholars hailing from the Indian subcontinent, both from Pakistan and India, and by scholars from the Western Hemisphere, including Britain and the USA, abound. Many of them are solid works providing valuable insights and information on outstanding events. In spite of these incisive studies, there is a need for a reappraisal of the developments leading to the partition, in the light of new research resources made available for study and research. The monumental eight-volume publication of letters, correspondence and speeches of Winston Churchill, edited by Martin Gilbert and published in the 1980s, has not been used by any author dealing with partition. This study makes use of this source and, for an understanding of Churchill's ideas and his role in the partition, Leo Amery's diaries entitled *The Empire at Bay: The Leo Amery Diaries, 1929–1945* published in 1988. *The Winston S. Churchill* volumes edited by Martin Gilbert, *The Exchequer Years, 1922–1929, The Wilderness Years, 1929–1935, The Coming of War, 1936–1939, Finest Hour, 1939–41, Road to Victory, 1941–1945* and *Never Despair, 1945–1965*, are of great relevance for an understanding of Churchill's position in relation to India. Neither Stanley Wolpert (1984), Gowher Rizvi (1978), Anita Inder Singh (1987) nor Ayesha Jalal (1985), have made use of these

invaluable sources for their studies. The Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah Papers (on microfilm) along with other related papers on Jinnah, Lord Mountbatten and Lord Wavell, available since 2000 in the British Library, London, have also been examined. In addition, a wide range of relevant private papers housed in the British Library, the National Archives of India and the Nehru Memorial Library have been consulted. It is now possible to speak of events, situations and personages involved with a greater degree of assurance than earlier. The seminal ideas of Clement Attlee and other luminaries of the Labour Party on the India problem can be gleaned from their speeches available in the *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons* and their writings in the *Transfer of Power* volumes edited by Nicholas Mansergh, which have been utilized with profit in this study.

With the exception of R.J. Moore's *Churchill, Cripps and India 1939–1945* (Clarendon Press, Oxford: 1979), which stands out as a balanced study based on Cripps's diaries, the rest of the studies on the partition broadly follow the scholarly tradition of H.V. Hodson, the author of *The Great Divide: Britain–India–Pakistan* (London and Karachi: 1969). Notable among them are Wolpert's *Jinnah of Pakistan* (New York: 1984); Gowher Rizvi's *Linlithgow and India: A Study of British Policy and the Political Impasse in India, 1936–1943*, published under the auspices of the Royal Historical Society (London: 1978); Anita Inder Singh's *The Origins of the Partition of India 1936–1947*, sponsored by the Inter-faculty Committee for South Asian Studies, University of Oxford (Oxford: 1987); and Ayesha Jalal's *The Sole Spokesman, Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (Oxford: 1985). Another book of R.J. Moore, *Escape from Empire: The Attlee Government and the Indian Problem* (Clarendon Press, Oxford: 1983) also deserves scholarly attention. Very recently, a well-researched book *The Cripps Version: The Life of Sir Stafford Cripps 1889–1952* (London: 2002) by Peter Clarke has been published. My conclusion that the main achievement of Cripps lay in concluding the defence formula with Jawaharlal Nehru to which Jinnah had acquiesced continues to hold. The formula was known as the Johnson–Cripps–Nehru formula. It was ready to be signed on 9 April 1942; Lord Linlithgow objected and sought Prime Minister Churchill's instructions. Churchill asked Cripps not to proceed with the matter further. On 10 April 1942, Cripps informed the Prime Minister that the mission had failed and that he was returning home (see Chapter 5).[16]

H.V. Hodson, a fellow of All Souls, Oxford, editor of the *Round Table* from 1934 to 1939, who served as Reforms Commissioner thereafter to Lord Linlithgow, was close to the events and happenings of the time and hence his writings are of great value. During Christmas 1938 he visited India, meeting important personages including Gandhi, whom he called 'the other Governor-General of India', and Jinnah, 'a conceited person, afraid that events may lose him the power that he craves'.[17] After he joined the Viceroy as the Reforms Commissioner, he seems to have changed his

allegiance away from Gandhi. In *The Great Divide*, he develops his thesis that the Hindu–Muslim divide dated back to the Arab invasion of Sind, and blamed the leadership of the Indian National Congress for 'the worst errors' which according to him paved the way for Pakistan. Wolpert recounts Congress's 'errors', Gandhi's 'double speak' and Jawaharlal Nehru's 'arrogance' and 'impetuosity' and several crucial statements issued by him, which seem to have tilted the balance in favour of partition. An otherwise eminently readable and authenticated biography of Jinnah is somewhat marred by such observations, many of which had their origin with the bureaucracy of the time. Gowher Rizvi's hero is the 'patriotic Briton', as he reverentially calls Linlithgow, holding his fort heroically in the midst of grave danger of war, dangerous both for Great Britain and its Indian empire, and keeping at bay the Congress, which, according to Rizvi, was determined to wrest independence at any cost from the British – hence Linlithgow's tilt towards Jinnah and the Muslim League.

In my view, Linlithgow was the key figure behind the unfolding of the partition proposals, which were later put forward by Jinnah at the historic Lahore session of the Muslim League on 22–24 March 1940. Several friendly parleys, meetings and discussions had taken place between Jinnah and Linlithgow after the commencement of the Second World War between September and November 1939 culminating in the partition idea in February–March 1940. From September to December 1939, another series of proposals under the Labour initiative was made with the blessing and guidance of Clement Attlee. Sir Stafford Cripps visited India to win over the support of the Congress for the war effort by offering full self-government, freedom and democracy to India after the conclusion of the war. It was a bold offer full of statesmanship which aimed at treating India on equal terms. The Congress were only too willing to accept the terms but Linlithgow obstructed the entire plan with disdain; it was equally fiercely opposed by Lord Zetland, the Secretary of State for India until 1940, and Churchill at home. Attlee pleaded in vain inside the House of Commons and outside for a constructive and imaginative approach to bring the largest political party of India on the side of Great Britain for the war effort. Had these proposals been accepted by the Conservatives the future course of Indian history would have been different. None of the authors, listed above, except R.J. Moore, have placed the significance of these initiatives.

In her monograph *The Sole Spokesman*, Ayesha Jalal addresses the question of Jinnah's demand for Pakistan, asserting that it was nothing but a bargaining exercise. Incidentally the term 'bargaining' was used first by Lord Linlithgow to mollify the ruffled tempers of Lord Zetland and other conservatives at home who were opposed to the idea of partition at that point in time. Jalal holds on to her thesis that Jinnah was not keen on Pakistan; it was the 'nationalists', meaning Congress, who wanted it, and he was driven to accept it by the hostile and ungenerous Congress leadership. It is

not clear, however, what Jinnah was bargaining for. Nor does Jalal tell us, if Jinnah did not want Pakistan what did he want. Was a weak centre desirable for India? Would India have existed as an independent nation in the light of fissiparous tendencies?

The partition story continues to be a most controversial story of our time. Some authors, including Mushirul Hasan in 'Memories of a Fragmented Nation: Rewriting the Histories of India's Partition', in Amrik Singh (ed.), *The Partition in Retrospect* (New Delhi: 2000), appear to plead to erase the memory of the travails of partition rather than remind each generation of the elements of high politics of the crucial phase of India's struggle for freedom between 1940 and 1947, which led to India's partition on the one hand and its independence on the other. Popular literary evidence is adduced to illustrate the disillusionment of the people with the Indian leadership for having accepted partition which brought about so much misery and suffering to the people. For one thing, partition was demanded by the Muslim League and its leader Jinnah; it was resisted until almost the end by the Indian National Congress. Second, the election of 1946 proved that the Muslim masses endorsed the Pakistan proposals by voting for the Muslim League. Third, the bitter experience of the Calcutta killings of August 1946, in the wake of the call for Direct Action, changed the entire political environment. No doubt the sensibilities of literary celebrities who were concerned more with the human dimension of the partition than the dilemma of those involved in the negotiations for sharing and transfer of power were bound to differ from historical writings. Also the emotive sensibilities of literary creations are bound to be more profoundly moving than the prosaic historical narratives.

If Jinnah was opposed to majority rule, and if the myth of nationalism was exploded by the Pakistan resolution, what were the other alternatives and options, which presented themselves and which were not accepted? By any stretch of imagination, would Jinnah's two-nation theory promote secularism? A dispassionate analysis of the Gandhi–Jinnah dialogue and correspondence of 1944 could be very revealing and could serve to expose many myths surrounding any compromise formula proposed. Since 1943, Jinnah had asserted that his ultimate objective was the attainment of Pakistan and that no negotiations with him would succeed unless the principle of Pakistan was accepted first along with the two-nation theory advanced by him. The failure of the Simla Conference of 1945 resulted from such insistence on the part of Jinnah. As long as Linlithgow was Viceroy, Jinnah harboured the belief that he would be able to secure from the British a 100-mile corridor running from Lahore to Calcutta right through the heart of the Jumna–Gangetic plain. He also had an eye on the Andamans and Nicobar Islands to serve as a naval base for the protection of East Pakistan. He wanted independence for the Nizams' territories, 'the last vestiges of Moghul empire', as

well as for the Nawab of Bhopal's dominion and desired to enter into treaties with them as sovereign states. With the full knowledge of Jinnah, the Pakistani forces entered Kashmir in September 1947. Once the war ended and Winston Churchill's Conservative Party was humbled in the general elections of 1945, the political climate changed dramatically and Clement Attlee, who considered the Muslim League to be 'the disruptionist party' refused to entertain any of these schemes of Jinnah.

Yet Jinnah was hopeful that the British would not leave India in the near future. In fact, he entertained the idea of ruling India in collaboration with the British for ever. Woodrow Wyatt, a British MP and a member of the British parliamentary delegation visiting India in December 1945 to January 1946, who was a close confidant of Jinnah and with whom he shared a drink or two in the evenings, writes in his delightful autobiography, *Confessions of an Optimist*: 'During the tour I met Mr Jinnah several times usually at his Lutyens English-style house at New Delhi. I became Jinnah's friend so far as it was possible to be friendly with so austere and uncommunicative a man . . . When I called on him he did not have his whisky and soda removed but offered me one too . . . [and] he asked, "Why don't the British drop all talk of independence? It's not necessary and it will do no good. If you said you would stay, the Muslims would fight for you and we could rule India together for ever. The Hindus are too feeble to resist and everyone would be happier."'[18] Jinnah uttered these words in all seriousness, nor did he say this under the influence of drinks. It suggests a certain degree of naivety on his part and a lack of perspective and understanding of the changed times in which he lived. Jinnah's views were corroborated by Woodrow Wyatt who sent a note dated 25 May 1946 to the Cabinet mission containing the main points of his discussions with Jinnah held on 24 May 1946. According to the note, Jinnah suggested that the Cabinet mission 'should put the statement on one side' and 'the British should remain as the binding force in the Indian centre for some 15 years and deal with defence and foreign affairs for Pakistan and Hindustan consulting the Prime Minister of each state'.[19] Jinnah thus wanted the British to stay on in India for 15 years more before independence was granted to India.

IV

A note of caution regarding the historiography of partition may not be out of place. Often it is not realized how difficult it is to be objective in our views and especially on history-writing. There is a nationalist perspective as well as a British perspective to contend with. Among British historians, and even among Indian historians, several schools of thought obtain. Besides, there are nationalists, radicals, leftists, Leninists, socialists of different hues and communalists apart from simply Hindu, Muslim and

Ambedkarite historians writing about India. Over and above all of them the Oxbridge history predominates. Then there are journalists writing about exciting events. I would tend to rely on eminent and reputed contemporary journalists like B. Shiva Rao, Durga Das or even Arthur Moore, John Gunther, Kingsley Martin, Geoffrey Dawson of *The Times*, to name a few.

It has been repeated many times that the Indian leaders, mostly belonging to the Congress, were jockeying for power, hence they sacrificed the national cause by hastily accepting partition of India. They were tired old men who seized the first opportunity to grasp power before it was too late for them to enjoy it. In *Last Days of the British Raj* (London: 1961), Leonard Mosley quotes Jawaharlal Nehru to prove this point, and the Indian journalists have grabbed the statement to hit out at the Indian National Congress leaders. Lord Mountbatten informs us that Leonard Mosley was commissioned to write about India by the British press-baron Lord Beaverbrook, who had become hostile to Lord Mountbatten after a long spell of friendship. It seems Mountbatten had allowed Noel Coward to make a film on the war, which was considered by Lord Beaverbrook as 'a vile attack on me'. Since then, after the meeting of 27 October 1942, he told him that he would 'destroy' Mountbatten.[20] If that was true, most of Mosley's statements must be taken with a proverbial pinch of salt. Most of the Indian leaders were in good health if not in fine fettle and in high spirits when India won its independence. There was sadness too because of partition. According to the considered opinion of many an authority writing on partition, it had become inevitable much before 1947. Woodrow Wyatt, member of the parliamentary delegation which preceded the Cabinet mission in 1946 and personal assistant to Sir Stafford Cripps during the Cabinet mission, had this to say about Jawaharlal Nehru when he met him in January 1946: 'It was on this trip that I met Nehru on 10 January 1946. Then fifty-six, he was handsome, sharp, full of life, argument and strength, not remotely like the pallid version of him in the film *Gandhi*.'[21] Similar expressive statements about other leaders could be cited to prove the fallacy of the argument. *The Guilty Men of India's Partition* is highly speculative in promoting the conspiracy theory: Ram Manohar Lohia, an important Indian socialist leader, observed that the Congress leaders had conspired with the British to partition India so that they could rule over it after the departure of the British.

It is important to bear in mind that Jinnah was in close communication with Winston Churchill. Whenever he visited London he met Churchill in private. Martin Gilbert states that Churchill refused Jinnah's luncheon invitation on one occasion, on the ground that it might create a furore. He also advised Jinnah to write to his lady secretary at her address rather than to him directly to avoid being detected.[22] The common enemy of Jinnah

and Churchill was the 'Hindu Congress caucus'. Winston Churchill's years of leadership during the war were indeed great; in his own words, he felt he was 'walking with destiny'. As a war hero he attained the highest pinnacle of glory. Most of the eulogies heaped on him add lustre to his imposing personality. But in relation to India his attitude seemed incredibly naive at times. His diehard rigidities ingrained in his imperialist world-view and his determination to stamp out the legitimate aspiration for freedom and democracy, for which the British fought the Second World War, were unworthy of his genius and greatness.

This study is of contemporary relevance. The legacy of partition still haunts the collective consciousness of the people of the Indian subcontinent. It has bedevilled good neighbourly relations between the two sovereign states of India and Pakistan. Who was responsible for this sordid political drama? The British, the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League have all been blamed to a greater or lesser degree for the partition. Gandhi and Jinnah have also stolen the limelight for their political designs and attitudes, and, according to many, must share the responsibility for partition. Still it is felt that enough attention has not been paid to Jinnah's role and British wartime politics in India and Britain, which are of crucial significance in understanding the political divide among Hindus and Muslims resulting in partition. It is also necessary to examine why Jinnah snapped his bonds of nationalism, and began championing the cause of what he called the 'Muslim India'. When did his journey from nationalism to communalism start? When did he wear the mantle of aggressive communalism and why? When did the metamorphosis from a liberal Jinnah to anti-Hindu Jinnah take place? What kind of transformation took place in the Indian political scenario to bring the relations between Hindus and Muslims to a point of no return? For an adequate understanding of principles, policies, and politics of power, it has been necessary to critically evaluate Jinnah's life, especially the early part of his life until the 1920s and the latter part after the death of Ruttie Jinnah. A convergence of personal factors and political failure at certain critical stages of Jinnah's life transformed him into a communalist: clues to such a transformation of Jinnah are to be found in these years, which have been ignored by historians and political analysts thus far.

Notes

1 Harold Macmillan, *Winds of Change* (London: 1966), p. 1
2 Ibid., p. 318.
3 A.P. Thornton in *The Oxford History of British Empire*, ed. Judith Brown and Francis Robinson (Oxford: 1998), IV, p. 629.
4 Wm. Roger Louis, ed-in-chief, *The Oxford History of British Empire*, V (Oxford: 1999), Introduction by Louis, p. 14.

5 S.R. Mehrotra, *Towards India's Freedom and Partition* (New Delhi: 1979), p. 167; E.S. Montagu's speech on 20 August 1917 in the House of Commons (H.C. Deb. 97, 55, Coll. 1295–6).
6 D.A. Low, *Britain and Indian Nationalism: The Imprint of Ambiguity 1929–1942* (Cambridge: 1997), p. 17.
7 Ibid., p. 34.
8 S.R. Mehrotra, *Towards India's Freedom and Partition* (New Delhi: 1979), p. 225; R.J. Moore, 'The Making of India's Paper Federation 1927–1935', in C.H. Philips and M.D. Wainwright (eds), *The Partition of India* (London: 1970), pp. 54–78; also see Carl Bridge, 'Conservatism and Indian Reform 1929–39: Towards a Prerequisite Model in Imperial Constitution Making?', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 4 (1975–76), pp. 179–93.
9 Nicholas Mansergh (editor-in-chief), Penderel Moon (ed.), *The Transfer of Power, 1942–47*, 12 vols (London: 1970–83), VIII, p. 37.
10 Penderel Moon (ed.), *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal* (Delhi: 1977), p. 19.
11 Manto, Sadat Hasan, *Partition sketches and stories* tr. from Urdu by Khalid Hasan (New Delhi: 1991).
12 Krishan Chander, *Selected Short Stories*, comp. by Gopi Chand Narang, tr. by Jai Ratan from Urdu (New Delhi: 1990).
13 Khushwant Singh, *Train to Pakistan* (New York: 1956).
14 Baldwin, Shauna Singh, *What the Body Remembers* (New Delhi: 1999).
15 Butalia, Urvashi, *The Other Side of Silence, Voices from the Partition of India* (Delhi: 1998).
16 See Chapter 5, 'The Cripps Offer, 1942'.
17 Hodson's note, 6 January 1939, Lumley Papers, Mss. Eur. F. 253/44.
18 Woodrow Wyatt, *Confessions of an Optimist* (London: 1985), p. 131.
19 *The Transfer of Power*, VII, no. 373, p. 686.
20 Mountbatten Papers, IOR. Neg. 17451, Reel 11.
21 Wyatt, *Confessions*, p. 128.
22 Martin Gilbert (ed.), *Winston S. Churchill, Never Despair, 1945–1965* (London: 1988), p. 292.

1

THE MAKING OF JINNAH

Jinnah's early life is shrouded in mystery. Jinnah himself was reluctant to speak about his ancestry, parentage, kith and kin, or immediate blood relations. It is not known whether any of his five brothers or his father's brothers or their relations ever met him in his heyday at the Bar in Bombay or while he was emerging as a distinguished political figure in India or when he actually adorned the highest position in Pakistan, that of the Governor-General of Pakistan. M.C. Chagla, a close associate of Jinnah, who worked as his junior at the Bar for eight years and later served as the secretary of the Muslim League when Jinnah was its president, tells us in his autobiography *Roses in December* that Jinnah was 'the uncrowned king' of Bombay in 1918 and 'an idol of the youth'.[1] But not so, it seems, for his own brothers and sisters – except Fatima, his youngest sister, who kept his house after the death of Ruttie Jinnah in 1928, and remained a constant companion of Jinnah throughout his life until he died in 1948. It appears Jinnah was not fond of maintaining close contact with his family relations nor did he seem to be proud of his ancestry. If anything, he wished to forget his past for ever, as stated by his biographer, Hector Bolitho.[2] Like Kemal Atatürk of Turkey, whose biography by H.C. Armstrong, *Grey Wolf, An Intimate Study of a Dictator*, was purchased and read by Jinnah in London around 1932, Jinnah seemed inclined to break away from the past: 'Away with dreams and shadows! They have cost us dear in the past'[3] Atatürk had said. For many days, Jinnah talked of nothing but Kemal Atatürk to his daughter Dina, who was then 13 years old. Dina, nicknamed her father Grey Wolf.[4]

Jinnah was neither a diarist nor a great letter writer. No letters of the early days written to his father or others are extant. Some dedicated biographers have attempted to piece together the story of Jinnah's life through interviews and personal contacts with his close acquaintances. Hector Bolitho's *Jinnah: Creator of Pakistan* is a laudable effort which is not only well researched, but is also based on the remiscences and memories of well-known and not so well-known personalities: British, Indians and Pakistanis. Other authors include Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, whose

numerous writings date from 1941 onwards;[5] Aziz Beg, *Jinnah and His Times*[6] and M.H. Saiyid, *Mohammed Ali Jinnah: A Political Study*.[7] Several contemporary authors and their writings exist: they are of great research value but they hardly touch upon Jinnah's personal life, as if it was of no consequence at all in the evolution of his personality or in the making of Pakistan. Authentic stories about Jinnah as a nationalist or a moderate nationalist abound. He was hailed by 1915 as 'the best ambassador of Hindu–Muslim Unity' by no less than a great political figure of those days, Gopal Krishna Gokhale; the renowned poet–politician Sarojini Naidu[8] said that Jinnah wanted to model himself 'as Muslim Gokhale'.[9]

But very few knew that Jinnah's ancestors were Hindu Rajputs. It is said that the founder of the family hailed from Shahiwal, in the Multan area and settled at Paneli village in the then Gondal state of Kathiawar. Mohammad Ali Jinnah's grandfather Poonja Meghji had five children; four of them were named Manbai, Valji, Nathoobhai and Jinnahbhai. Nothing is known of the fifth child. Jinnahbhai was born around 1857, and was married to Mithibai in 1874. On displaying exceptional business acumen, he moved to Karachi from Gondal in 1875. The forefathers of Jinnah were Khoja Muslims, who were traders and belonged to the Aga Khan's Ismaili sect and were Shias. Mohammad Ali Jinnah was the eldest of the children born of Poonja Jinnahbhai and Mithibai. Other children of Jinnahbhai were Rahamat Ali, Maryam, Ahmed Ali, Shireen, Fatima and Bande Ali. All the brothers and sisters of Jinnah remained obscure except Fatima, who it seems qualified as a dentist and devoted her life to the service of her brother Mohammad Ali Jinnah.[10]

For the first time in his family, Poonja Jinnahbhai, the father of Mohammad Ali Jinnah, discarded the practice of giving Hindu names to his children. Poonja Meghji, the grandfather of Jinnah, had given Hindu names to his children and had followed most of the Hindu religious rituals. It was Poonja Jinnahbhai, father of Mohammad Ali Jinnah, who also dropped the ancient customary Hindu rite of observing *Chatti*, the sixth day after the birth of the child, when blessings of Hindu deities are invoked after a purificatory bath. And it was Poonja Jinnahbhai who began giving lessons in the Qur'an to his children.[11]

Jinnah himself did not seem too obsessed with the customs and traditions of those times. He studied in different schools: first in a Muslim madrasa in Karachi; then in a school run by Hindus in Bombay, known as Gokul Das Tej primary school; and finally in the Christian Missionary Society high school in Karachi. He left for London to study for the Bar at the young age of 16. His attitude was quite catholic and pragmatic.

Jinnah's father was a hide merchant, who became friendly with the English manager of the Graham Trading Company. Through his contacts he was able to extend his business to Hong Kong and other distant places and formed his own company, Jinnah Poonja and Company.[12] He and his

wife and seven children lived in a modest two-roomed house in a narrow street known as Newnham Road in Karachi.[13] According to Sarojini Naidu, Jinnah was the eldest son of 'a rich merchant... reared in careless affluence'.[14] All accounts testify to the contrary. Chagla mentions that Jinnah had risen from 'abject poverty'.[15] Jinnah's humble circumstances and background seems obvious also from the fact that the father did not keep an accurate record of Mohammad Ali Jinnah's birth. The school register shows his date of birth to be 20 October 1875 but Jinnah himself is on record as having said that he was born on 25 December 1876.[16]

Although Jinnah was imbued with native intelligence and talent, he did not show much promise in school. He had his schooling in fits and starts. At the Sind madrasa in Karachi he did not feel interested in studies and told his father so. Hence, he was removed and began sharing his father's tasks at the shop. But this also did not engage his attention. He went to Bombay in 1886 to join Gokul Das Tej primary school, returning to the Sind madrasa a year or so later. Finally, in 1891 he joined the Christian Missionary Society high school at Karachi and studied there until he was about 15.[17] On the advice of an English man, Frederick Leigh Craft, who was a fairly well-established Exchange broker in Bombay and Karachi, Mohammad Ali Jinnah was sent to London to obtain some training in office management and trading practices. He sailed for London at the age of 16 in 1892 to work in the head office of the Graham Trading Company, but disliked working there and joined Lincoln's Inn to study law.[18]

Once in London, Mohammad Ali Jinnah was a totally transformed person. For four years he burnt the midnight oil to equip himself for the profession of his choice. He needed to work hard not only to master the foreign language but also to immerse himself in the study of law. Without any connections, without ample means at his command and in unfamiliar and cold surroundings, he braced himself to face the challenges all by himself at the young age of 16. He refused to be tempted by the pleasures and frivolities of London life; he did not have the means to indulge in them. Still in his teens he became his own master, studying hard and acquitting himself with credit. First, he cleared the preliminary test essential for admission to Lincoln's Inn. Thereafter with single-minded devotion he absorbed himself in his studies, passing the Bar examination in two years. The next two years were needed 'to eat' the dinners before being called to the Bar. He became barrister-at-law at the young age of 20. He was perhaps the youngest Indian to achieve this feat. He was bound to be proud, and justifiably so, of his proven qualities of intellect and expertise.

He returned to India as a barrister in 1896 starting his practice in Karachi. But he found the city too provincial and crossed over to the metropolitan city of Bombay registering himself as an advocate of the high court on 24 August 1896.

For three years, Jinnah had no briefs. Meanwhile, his father died in penury losing his business. Sir John Molesworth Macpherson, the acting advocate-general of Bombay, was kind enough to allow him to work in his chambers. In 1900, Sir Charles Ollivant, the member in charge of the judicial department of the Bombay government, offered him a job with a monthly salary of 1500 rupees, but he declined the offer saying that it was his ambition to earn that much in a day.[19] Jinnah must have been grateful to the Englishman for trying to be of help in times of distress, but only he could have refused such an offer, especially as his finances were desperate.

Once he got going, Jinnah made a fortune in no time. At the Bombay Bar, every one of his contemporaries and juniors – Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, M.R. Jayakar, Justice Sir Hira Lal Kania, Motilal C. Setalvad, M.C. Chagla included – is on record praising Jinnah as an exceptional advocate. He read his briefs methodically and with great care, was logical and persuasive in his arguments, 'fought like a tiger' on behalf of his clients, and won most of the cases.[20] He was not a great jurist or a lawyer or a law maker, but his gift of the gab and his superb advocacy took Jinnah to the highest rung of the ladder among the members of the Bar in Bombay.[21] We shall revert to this subject later. Suffice it is to say that he fought for the Pakistan demand with equal zeal, advocated his case for Pakistan in clear-cut, unambiguous language and demolished the arguments of the Congress leaders with cold logic. Uncompromising, remorseless and contemptuous of all opposition, he impressed the British, who felt he had won the day for the cause he so eloquently and convincingly espoused. That was Jinnah of the 1940s.

The behaviour pattern of Jinnah, however, until the 1920s was marked by suavity, amiableness, understanding and liberalism. Trained as a barrister, he modelled himself as an English gentleman in his personal lifestyle, dress and mannerisms. Jinnah's attitude to politics as well as in personal affairs was liberal, eclectic, catholic and pragmatic. B. Shiva Rao, an eminent journalist and a close associate of liberals, records an incident of 1917 which reflects on Jinnah's openness of mind even in matters relating to Hinduism. Jinnah was then president of the Home Rule League in Bombay. When Annie Besant was interned by the British government for her political activities on behalf of Home Rule, Jinnah called a meeting to consider Gandhi's proposal to march with a band of volunteers from Madras to Ootackamund, a distance of 350 miles, to force the government to release her. At the meeting, B.G. Horniman, editor of the *Bombay Chronicle* (an Englishman), Syod Hussain, Jamnadas Dwarkadas, Omar Sobhani, Shankerlal Banker and B. Shiva Rao were present. Tilak was invited but he arrived late. In the meantime, Jinnah was heard explaining to Horniman that 'the sect among the Muslims to which he belonged believed in the ten *avatars* and had much in common with Hindus in their inheritance laws and social customs'. Those present at the meeting

rejected Gandhi's proposal and agreed with Tilak who said that it was quite impractical.[22]

Another incident of some significance may be related. Jinnah, as a member of the Central Legislative Assembly, was also a member of the Muddiman Reforms Committee, Other members were Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Sir Sivaswamy Aiyar and Dr R.P. Paranjpye. Jinnah used to walk over to Metcalfe House in Delhi where Sir Tej was staying. After dinner, they would discuss the draft of Sir Tej. One evening, Jinnah said: 'Sapru, I think I have a solution for the Hindu–Muslim problem. You destroy your orthodox priestly class and we will destroy our Mullahs and there will be communal peace.'[23] Jinnah was a staunch nationalist and liberal then. The minority report of the Muddiman Committee was the handiwork of the liberals, named above, who sought acceleration of the pace of reform for self-government in the provinces and at the centre.

Jinnah's marriage and attitude towards Hindus

Jinnah's marriage to Ruttie Petit, daughter of Sir Dinshaw Petit, caused a sensation in Bombay. It was the talk of the town for months. Ruttie was beautiful, charming and graceful; a socialite and the spark of Bombay's elite. Jinnah was one of the most eligible bachelors; tall, slim, handsome, rich with a roaring practice at the Bar, and, as Chagla put it, 'was an uncrowned king of Bombay'. In 1918, when the marriage was solemnized, Ruttie was barely 18 but she was educated, well-read and loved English literature, especially romantic poetry. She came from a modern, highly sophisticated, well-known distinguished Parsi family of Bombay. The Parsi community had given to India great patriots and politicians like Dadabhai Naoroji, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, Sir Dinshaw Wacha and a host of others who were equally prominent in industry and business. Sir Dinshaw Petit was one of the illustrious families in textiles and a close friend of Jinnah who used to visit the family very often. Jinnah is reported to have gone on a holiday to Darjeeling along with the family, where the love bug seems to have bitten both Jinnah and Ruttie. Jinnah was 41 when they decided to marry much against the wishes of Ruttie's parents. They in fact forbade Ruttie, who was a minor, to enter into wedlock with Jinnah. A court injunction was taken by Sir Dinshaw Petit against the marriage. The day she turned 18 Ruttie left home to marry Jinnah after embracing Islam.

The first three years of marriage were blissful for the couple. Jinnah went to England in 1918 to give evidence before the select committee of Parliament in connection with the Reforms Act 1919. Ruttie accompanied her husband and they had their only child, Dina, in 1919. But soon differences surfaced and affected their marital harmony. Various reasons are cited by the biographers and contemporaries of Jinnah: age difference, the cold and unemotional attitude of Jinnah, and the ambition of Jinnah, wedded

to his profession and politics. His political career was extremely important to him, and he would not have liked any obstacle in his ascent to power.

Of course, age difference does count, but not so much as to break the marriage unless there were other irreconcilable differences. In fact, Jinnah had good fortune in having such a charming, lively and accomplished wife like Ruttie. He was only in his forties and could have enjoyed life to the full. Ruttie was known for her modern outlook; she was full of life and wanted to lead a life of gay abandon within the bounds of social and personal morality. She was devoted to Jinnah and it is observed by his close friends, Chagla and Diwan Chaman Lall, that she continued to love Jinnah until the end of her life. Diwan Chaman Lall, close to both Jinnah and Ruttie, once observed: 'I had always admired Ruttie Jinnah so much; there is not a woman in the world today to hold a candle to her for her beauty and charm. She was a lovely spoiled child and Jinnah was inherently incapable of understanding her.'[24]

Chagla recalls in his autobiography that the marriage 'was an unhappy failure as might have been expected. Ruttie had married Jinnah because of the glamour of his personality and there was nothing common between them. In temperament they were poles apart. Jinnah used to pore over his briefs everyday... Ruttie, as a young woman, was fond of life and of the frivolities of youth. They gradually drifted apart from each other'.[25] Chagla says that 'she supplied him the greatest provocation throughout their married life'.[26] Yet Jinnah treated her as generously as possible.

Ruttie was uninhibited and unconcerned with the world around. She followed her heart. She refused to observe the social etiquettes of the old Muslim social order. Chagla tells us how once, while Jinnah and Chagla were waiting for the voting to be completed at the Bombay town hall, 'in comes Ruttie with a tiffin basket announcing loudly that she had brought for him some lovely ham sandwiches'.[27] Jinnah exclaimed: 'My God, what have you done? Do you want me to lose my election. Do you realise I am standing from a Muslim separate electorate seat, and if my voters were to know that I am going to eat ham sandwiches for lunch, do you think I have a ghost of a chance of being elected?' Ruttie with her basket went back disappointed. After some time, Jinnah and Chagla walked over to a nearby restaurant well-known in Bombay and ordered a plate of pork sausages, pastries and coffee for lunch.[28]

Chagla relates another act of indiscretion: 'I remember her walking to Jinnah's chamber while we were in the midst of a conference, dressed in a manner which would be called fast, even by modern standards, perched herself upon Jinnah's table, dangling her feet and waiting for Jinnah to finish the conference, so that they could leave together. Jinnah never uttered a word of protest and carried on with his work as if she were not there at all. One can imagine how the patience of a man of Jinnah's temper must have been taxed.'[29]

A Muslim League meeting was being held in the Globe cinema in Bombay. Jinnah was President of the League and Chagla was secretary. Chagla writes: 'In walked Ruttie dressed in the manner I have just described up to the platform where she took her seat. The hall was full of bearded Maulvis and Maulanas and they came to me in great disgust and asked me who that woman was. They demanded that she should be asked to leave as the clothes she flaunted constituted an offence to Islamic eyes.'[30] Jinnah's reputation among the Muslims seemed at stake, but Ruttie seemed indifferent to it.

At a dinner hosted by Lord and Lady Willingdon, Ruttie Jinnah went in a low-cut evening dress. Lady Willingdon called for a shawl commenting that Mrs Jinnah might catch cold. Jinnah took offence and told Lady Willingdon that if Mrs Jinnah felt cold she would ask for a shawl herself and the Jinnahs withdrew from the dinner.'[31] It is no coincidence that, when Lord Willingdon was to be given a farewell by the citizens of Bombay at the town hall, the meeting could not be held since the Jinnahs led the anti-Willingdon faction opposing the passing of any resolution for loyalty and appreciation of Lord Willingdon. The crowd was cleared by the commissioner of police but Jinnah stood his ground to address the gathering assembled at Apollo Street in Bombay with Ruttie by his side, asking them to rejoice at 'the triumph of democracy'. This happened on 12 December 1918.

Similarly, Ruttie offended Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy of India. Instead of curtseying and shaking hands, she greeted him with folded hands. Lord Chelmsford reportedly observed: 'In Rome, one should do what the Romans do.' Ruttie's quick reply was that is why she followed India's traditional way of greeting people.[32]

These delightful eccentricities and amiable indiscretions must have thrilled the Jinnahs as long as they were in love. Later, the seemingly innocuous and innocent incidents were likely to produce ripples, if not rupture, in their relations.

Ruttie was yet to drop a bombshell which was probably one of the most important causes of the failure of their marriage. Just as the marriage had been the talk of the town, the rupture in their relations and the marital discord were bound to enliven media interest and create a flutter in the social circles of Bombay. Ruttie's conversion to Islam was merely a matter of convenience. She had been wedded to the glamour boy, Jinnah, not to Islam. Jinnah was not a religious man. He seldom visited a mosque or offered *namaz*. K.L. Gauba, son of Har Kishan Lal, the well-known pioneer industrialist of the Punjab, and a barrister himself and a friend of Jinnah, writes in his *Friends and Foes: An Autobiography* that he took Jinnah to the Badshahi mosque in Lahore in 1936 where he was expected to address the people. Jinnah told him that he had 'never visited a mosque' and 'was not very good in offering prayers': 'In the mosque Jinnah took

out his shoes and sat, he did not know how to go down on his knees. I was aghast to see him squatting like a Hindu Brahmin with his knees and hands folded.'[33] While addressing the crowd he roared that he would fight to his last breath to have 'the Shahid Ganj Masjid returned to the Muslims... The Masjid Shahid Ganj was the property of God and God could not be deprived of His property.'[34]

Woodrow Wyatt, a friend of Jinnah, observes: 'I met Jinnah several times in his Lutyens English-style house in New Delhi and became Jinnah's friend, so far as it is possible to be friendly with so austere and in-communicative a man [like Jinnah]. When I called on him he did not have his whiskey and soda removed but offered me one too.'[35] His partaking of drinks or forbidden food was against Islamic tenets but he did not hesitate to enjoy these little pleasures in private; and this reflected well on the liberal lifestyle he led.

Ruttie had become friendly with Annie Besant, the theosophist and erstwhile leader of the Home Rule League and Indian National Congress. Jinnah respected her and had called her his leader once,[36] but Ruttie was becoming interested in Hinduism and Hindu philosophy. Jiddu Krishnamurthy, regarded as an excellent exponent of Hindu philosophy, also seems to have influenced Ruttie. Her appreciation of the philosophical foundations of Hinduism and her belief in the concept of *karma*, transmigration of soul, reincarnations and so on must have created discord in the marital home.[37] Jinnah was bound to be distressed with these activities of Ruttie. Most of his biographers – Aziz Beg, S.S. Pirzada, Kanji Dwarkadas – mention these influences on Ruttie but are silent about Jinnah's reaction to them. All of them were devotees of Jinnah and it was natural for them to gloss over the differences which seem to have wrecked the marriage. Much later, Jinnah, in a different context, was on record saying that he did not approve of 'the Hindu way of expressing things',[38] especially by his adversary Gandhi. Jinnah's statement bears testimony to the fact that he did not appreciate ways of thinking and doing that were so ardently reminiscent of Hinduism. Right in his home, however, Ruttie's conduct was a constant reminder of her being almost a Hindu. Ruttie came under the influence of the theosophists from 1924 onwards. In fact, she went to Annie Besant in 1925 and asked her permission to join the Theosophical Society, but Mrs Besant dissuaded her from doing so. Obviously she felt that such a move on Ruttie's part would destroy her married life, but she had detected that both Ruttie's inner life and married life were deeply disturbed. She is reported to have said: 'Don't you see unhappiness in her eyes? Look at her.'[39]

On the bedrock of Hinduism, therefore, Jinnah's marriage seemed to flounder. Earlier, Ruttie would accompany Jinnah to the Muslim League meetings, but in 1925 she went to Adyar, Madras, to attend the jubilee session of the Theosophical Convention. Jinnah went alone to Aligarh to

attend the Muslim League meeting held in the Christmas week.[40] No doubt Jinnah's personal lifestyle was quite liberal, but it must be remembered that he married Ruttie after her conversion to Islam. One source opined that Jinnah's political future would have been jeopardized if he had married a Parsi without her conversion. Jinnah represented Bombay's Muslim community in the Imperial Legislative Council and no doubt he would have been a centre of criticism from the Muslim orthodoxy. In any case, Jinnah seems to have been wedded to his political career too; in fact, by all accounts and evidence, it could be said that his political career was of greater importance than his love life. He could be cold and unemotional on the question of politics. At all costs he had to perpetuate his political existence and leadership, which had lent him so much power, influence, dignity and prestige in the public life of Bombay and India. Besides, Jinnah was not so liberal as not to insist on Ruttie's embracing Islam before marriage. Even if Ruttie was not a Muslim by faith, it was expected that she would not so beyond the limits of religious heterodoxy and swing towards the other side, Hinduism. Jinnah finally decided to put an end to this phase of his life and separated from Ruttie in 1928.

Diwan Chaman Lall related the last part of Ruttie's life to Hector Bolitho, Jinnah's biographer. Lall visited Ruttie in the nursing home in Paris, where she was lying critically ill; he informed Jinnah, who was in Ireland, about the state of Ruttie's health. Though separated, Jinnah went to Paris, moved Ruttie to a better nursing home with more competent doctors. Ruttie recovered. Lall meanwhile had gone to Canada. Returning from there he asked Jinnah, who was still in Paris, where Ruttie was. Jinnah replied, 'we quarrelled'.[41] Ruttie left for India alone where she died a couple of months later, unattended. It is quite clear that the disagreements continued to bedevil their relations even when the spectre of Ruttie's death loomed large before Jinnah's eyes.

Jinnah's separation from Ruttie and her subsequent death in 1928 must have shattered Jinnah, who never married again. However, Jinnah, it appears, never spoke about Ruttie afterwards and all her belongings were packed and moved to some obscure corner in the house at Mount Pleasant Road, Bombay, never to be seen by Jinnah. This was truly the parting of ways with Ruttie. Was it Hinduism or its influence which destroyed Jinnah's happiness for ever?

During these very years, 1928 and 1929, when his family life was disturbed, Jinnah experienced difficulties at the Calcutta Convention convened to discuss the Nehru Report. Jinnah's proposed amendments were rejected and he felt 'deeply hurt'. He believed his proposals were reasonable. He wanted separate electorates to continue; one-third of the seats to be reserved in the provincial and central legislatures for Muslims; and the residuary powers to be vested in the provinces and not at the centre. Jinnah wanted a federal system with a weak centre. However, his

failure to get political mileage at the Congress mortified him. According to Durga Das, this was a turning point in Indian politics and Jinnah called it a 'parting of ways' from 'Motilal Nehru and his lot'.[42] The personal tragedy coincided with his political failure.

Between 1929 and 1932 Jinnah was completely cut off from the mainstream of Indian politics and seemed nervous and despairing of his political future. Even the government dropped him from the delegation to be sent to London to attend the third Round Table Conference.[43] Obviously he felt as if his future was totally bleak. He observed that the Congress did not take him seriously because his support base was poor.[44] He was determined to broaden his power base and for this he used the crescent card. Only his Muslim brethren could provide a sizeable support. His stint in communalist politics began thereafter. The beginning of his anti-Hindu metamorphosis can be traced from this time. Sir Evelyn Wrench, editor of *The Spectator* during the Round Table days, mentions in his memoirs, *Immortal Years*, that he met Jinnah many times between 1930 and 1944. He also interviewed Gandhi and enjoyed his austere hospitality at the Gandhi Ashram in Wardha twice. He claims that he was friendly to both and as an Irishman was very sympathetic to the Indian cause. In 1944, he met Jinnah for the last time: 'I asked Mr Jinnah when he first got the vision of Pakistan and he told me it was in 1930.'[45] It was not a mere coincidence that he felt that India was no longer a place to live in. The vague contours of Pakistan were conceived by Dr Muhammad Iqbal also around this time, only to be forsaken towards the end of his life saying that it was not in the best interest of Muslims. Jinnah vigorously pursued the goal of Pakistan until it was achieved.

Dwarkadas mentions that Ruttie was a great nationalist without any communal bias or prejudices.[46] Her separation from Jinnah and finally her death removed from Jinnah's personal lifestyle the earlier traces of liberalism. It is noteworthy that, after Ruttie's death, Jinnah's sister Fatima kept house for him and remained his constant companion until his death. Fatima never married and her influence on Jinnah's private life was considerable. Wyatt remarks on Fatima in his *Confessions of an Optimist*, 'who kept house for him and whom he would round on, to my embarrassment and who though forbidding-looking herself was plainly terrified of him'.[47]

Chagla was another great admirer of Ruttie:

> Ruttie was a real nationalist and kept Jinnah on the right track so long as she was alive. Mrs Jinnah had also a sense of humour of which Jinnah was completely innocent and with her humour she often brought down Jinnah with a peg or two whenever he showed a disposition to mount one of his familiar pontifical heights. After her death, Jinnah's sole companion was his sister, Fatima, who

> was even more communal-minded, and partly responsible for the transformation brought about in Jinnah subsequently... She enjoyed Jinnah's diatribe against the Hindus, and if anything, injected an extra dose of venom into them.[48]

Begum Liaquat Ali Khan recalled how Fatima was worried about 'guarding' Jinnah from 'intruders', especially if they were women: 'Oh, how she hated Ruttie. I think she must have been jealous of us all! We used to call her the Wicked Witch!'[49]

The clues to Jinnah's anti-Hindu stance of later years, characterized as it was by a certain degree of vehemence and aggressiveness unbelievable in a man of culture, could perhaps be found in the frustration of his marital life. He must have blamed the Hindu way of doing things and thinking for marital failure, separation and the death of Ruttie. Consequently, suppressed sexual urges and his political discomfiture in having failed to succeed Tilak as leader of all-India since Gandhi had emerged as a supreme leader in the 1920s led Jinnah to a state of anger and depression. John Gunther of *Inside Asia* fame observed in 1939 that Jinnah's 'fierce separatism' all but ruined his position as well as the negotiated peace process in Indian politics.[50] Psychologists have argued that sources of aggression could have their roots not only in 'frustration' but in pain caused by 'obstacles to goal attainment'.[51] Also, men could be driven by 'aggressive motivation' because of cultural 'conditioning and reconditioning',[52] as was the case in Jinnah's transformation in the 1940s (see Chapter 2). Again, 'A leader coveting power or property could, with propaganda, instil in his subjects admiration for war-like attitudes'.[53] The Pakistan demand became a war cry for the Muslims under Jinnah's leadership in the 1940s. It is worth observing, as the psychologists have observed, 'people who find aggression rewarding are more, not less, likely to attack in the future'.[54] These insights help us understand the behaviour pattern of a man in society, although they may not be conclusive proof of man's aggressiveness.

Jinnah was, of course, more English than an Englishman. He was always meticulously dressed, donning Savile Row suits with matching tie and shoes. It is said that he seldom used a tie twice. He spoke 'faultless' English with an accent and led a very sheltered and secluded life. His house in Delhi blended well architecturally with Lutyens's Delhi. It is not surprising that Jinnah kept his private life closed to others. Sir Evelyn Wrench, the editor of *The Spectator* in the 1930s, did not fail to notice that Jinnah's life was unlike Gandhi's, which was an open book and always under public gaze. He seldom ever confided about his private life, family, marriage and such like with anyone.[55] Jinnah married twice. Both the brides were very young. He first married when he was barely 16 and his bride was probably about 13 or 14 years old. Aziz Beg, his biographer, informs us how he was bold enough to pay a visit to his father-in-law asking him to allow his bride

to be taken over to his own home. The astonished father-in-law agreed to his insolent request.[56] But in the case of Ruttie, Jinnah married her when she was only 18 and he was over 41. The *nikahnama* (marriage contract) was signed and the marriage was consummated; they had a daughter, Dina, their only offspring.

Jinnah's first marriage was solemnized in 1892; the girl bride died soon after while Jinnah was in London studying for the Bar. The second marriage took place in 1918. Throughout the best part of his youth he led a celibate life, we are informed by the eulogist biographers. His marriage with Ruttie lasted less than ten years, half of which were wasted in marital discord. Jinnah never remarried after Ruttie's death which occurred in 1928. Jinnah died at the age of 72 in 1948. During the last four years of his life he was ailing. In other words, as the evidence goes, for nearly 50 years he did not have the pleasure of enjoying the company of women. Only Fatima, his sister, was his constant companion. He must have led a dry, humourless, barren life without any female contact for most of his remaining years, or his earlier existence before 1918, without having had any sexual encounters as far as information goes. Would such an existence, with suppressed sexual desires and urges, produce sometimes, if not often, an upsurge of emotive responses in which the feelings of hurt, jealousy, annoyance, anger, hatred, revenge and depression would be dominant ingredients? Dr J.A.L. Patel, who treated Jinnah for his illness, has held that 'he had been deeply hurt in his life, by the years of abject poverty in Bombay and by the failure of his marriage; it made him put up defences against close personal relationships'.[57] Jinnah also suffered from depression: 'His flashes of anger and petulance were results of his illness and depression.'[58] It is interesting to note that Jawaharlal Nehru, who was widowed in 1936, enjoyed the company of women; with some his relationship was quite close, according to contemporary opinion. The Nehru temper was proverbial, but he was regarded as a very polished, elegant, cultured and pleasant man, a most eligible widower, at the age of 47. Was Jinnah jealous of Jawaharlal Nehru? Gandhi also had his women devotees, as pointed out by Bhikhu Parekh in his engaging article 'Sex, Energy and Politics'.[59] If Jinnah was a puritan, especially in matters of sex and relationships with women, and was 'reserved' and 'dignified', did he feel repelled by observing Gandhi's or Nehru's unconventional behaviour? Jinnah used to say about Jawaharlal Nehru that 'he was a Peter Pan who had learnt nothing nor had he unlearnt anything'.[60] He detested Gandhi from the innermost corner of his heart.[61] He could not have approved Gandhi's practice of resting his arms on the shoulders of two young women, while on his way to the prayer meetings. He must have been appalled by Gandhi's 'antics', experimenting with the women, sleeping with them without any clothes. Gandhi's close friends, and even his secretary N.K. Bose, could not understand this behaviour pattern, much less appreciate it. Bose resigned and wrote to

Gandhi to desist from such behaviour. Of course, it is a different matter that Gandhi wrote about these experiments in minute details in his journal *Harijan* every day, and these were open to public scrutiny. Eric Erikson, the psychologist, has analysed the behaviour of Gandhi very succinctly in his *Gandhi's Truth*.[62]

The point is that Jinnah's disgust at his adversaries was so pronounced that his own traits need to be analysed to gain an insight into his aggressiveness so glaringly evident in the latter part of his life. Jinnah was ill in 1945–46, during the Simla Conference and the Cabinet mission negotiations. He was petulant, edgy and often depressed. He suspected that Stafford Cripps and Gandhi were directing the mission to 'give India to a Congress government'.[63] His pathetic outburst was noted by Wyatt in his autobiography. Jinnah is reported to have said to him: 'Let them finish us off if they want to. I don't care. It would be better than the agony of not knowing where we are. I and those who are willing to be, will be killed. The only people who can settle this are Gandhi, Nehru, Patel and myself [Wyatt].'[64] Jinnah's frustration in his private life in the 1920s and his unfulfilled political ambition owing to the ascendancy of Gandhi, further exacerbated their relations. Jinnah, however, rose again, but now as a supreme leader, the position he had coveted all along; not as a moderate liberal leader but driven by 'aggressive motivation' instilling in his Muslim fraternity a communal consciousness by arousing their passions in the name of a separate national identity. He used the religious and communal symbols and idioms to arouse the Muslim community to political action to fight for a separate homeland. Jinnah had criticized Gandhi in 1920 for leading a pseudo-religious movement; but in the 1940s he invoked religion-based identity of Muslims to gain their enthusiastic support for the Muslim League which he led.

Jinnah's political ambition: discomfiture and fulfilment

Mohammad Ali Jinnah was a political figure of some standing in India long before Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru appeared on the political scene. Gandhi's fame, however, as a hero of the settlement of the Indian question in South Africa, preceded his arrival in India. Soon after he landed in 1914, Gandhi met Gopal Krishna Gokhale, who advised him to tour India on foot for a year without uttering a word anywhere. Gandhi adhered to his promise and acquired a first-hand knowledge of India through his visits to its cities, towns and villages. Jinnah, meanwhile, continued to serve the India cause as an associate of Gokhale. He accompanied him to England as a representative of the Bombay Presidency Association in place of Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, who dropped out of the delegation in 1905. Gokhale was a delegate on behalf of the Indian National Congress. Both of them laboured later in the Imperial Legislative Council, Jinnah

having been elected a member in 1910 from the Bombay Muslim reserved constituency. Jinnah was renominated as additional member of the council in 1913. Gokhale considered Jinnah 'a man of true stuff' and 'an ambassador of Hindu–Muslim Unity'. Jinnah on his part modelled himself as a disciple of Gokhale. On Gokhale's demise in 1915, while paying his tribute to him, Jinnah said that he always looked on Gokhale as his guru. Earlier in 1906, Jinnah had served as private secretary to the grand old man, Dadabhai Naoroji, who was elected President of the Indian National Congress in Calcutta. Sir William Wedderburn, one of the founding fathers of the Indian National Congress, took Jinnah to London in 1915 as a Congress delegate to meet eminent British politicians sympathetic to the Congress.[65]

Jinnah held Bal Gangadhar Tilak, an extremist Congress leader and contemporary of Gokhale, in highest regard. He had argued in favour of Tilak in the court of appeal presided over by Justice Bachelor and Justice Shah, and Tilak's conviction was set aside. Thus Jinnah assumed importance in Indian politics. After his release in 1915 from the Mandalay jail, Tilak had almost become a moderate leader and joined the Bombay Home Rule League of which Jinnah was President. By this time, Jinnah's fame had travelled beyond the frontiers of Maharashtra and Bombay. In Bombay, he was regarded 'as the uncrowned king' and the 'idol of youth'. Chagla writes that 'even when he [Jinnah] was in the process of changing his political stand and becoming more and more communal I never remember his ever saying anything which was derogatory for Tilak. Two persons in public life for whom Jinnah showed the great respect were Gokhale and Tilak. He had harsh things to say about Gandhiji, Nehru and others; but as far as Gokhale and Tilak were concerned, Jinnah had the most profound admiration and respect for them and for their views.'[66]

Under Jinnah's leadership the famed Lucknow Pact was signed in 1916. It was he who, as President of the Muslim League, brought the League closer to the Congress and the pact was hailed as a landmark in the history of Hindu–Muslim relations in India. It had succeeded in forging unity of purpose in the electoral design of India. Thus, Jinnah rightly considered himself a senior leader and statesman and expected others to pay due regard to his seniority in age and political experience and above all to his expertise and abilities on matters relating to constitutional law and constitution making in the country. While Gandhi was Jinnah's contemporary, having been born at almost the same time, Jawaharlal Nehru was 11 years younger than Jinnah and yet to evolve as a leader. In fact, Nehru's political apprenticeship began in 1918 under Gandhi's leadership, although he was a member of the Allahabad branch of Annie Besant's Home Rule League.

There is an interesting entry in Edwin Samuel Montagu's *Indian Diary* about Jinnah. Montagu landed in Bombay on 10 November 1917 and left for London on 27 April 1918. For nearly six months he toured the length

and breadth of the country meeting leaders in politics and other domains to have a feel of the Indian political situation and above all to understand the urges and aspirations of the Indian people before submitting his reform proposals to the House of Commons. He records that after talking with Sir Surendranath Banerjea and Madholkar he met Jinnah:

> Young, perfectly mannered, impressive looking, armed to teeth in dialectics and insistence upon the whole of his scheme. All its shortcomings, all its drawbacks, the elected members of the Executive Council, the power of the minority hold-up legislation, the complete control of the Executive in all matters of finance, all these were defended as the best make shifts they could devise short of responsible government. They would rather have nothing if they could not get the whole lot . . . Jinnah is a very clever man and it is of course an outrage that such a man should have no chance of running the affairs of his own country.[67]

Jinnah had put forward an excellent critique of the reform proposals. He, in fact, was 'very sound in his views' and far advanced of his times. Montagu could not but praise his talent.[68]

In contrast to the well-groomed constitutionalist Jinnah, Montagu 'saw the renowned Gandhi. He is a social reformer: he has a real desire to find grievances and to cure them not for any reasons of self-advancement but to improve the conditions of his fellowmen. He has been helping the government to find solution of the grievance of the Indigo labour in Bihar. He dresses like a coolie, forswears all personal advancements, lives practically on the air, and is a pure visionary.'[69] Montagu further notes that Gandhi did not discuss the constitutional issues nor did he seem to have a command over them but his presence was electric.[70] Montagu also seemed in agreement with what Walker, representative of the *Manchester Guardian*, had to say about Jinnah. Montagu had given letters of introduction to him so that he could study India and report to him. Montagu recalls: 'Walker had a better reception than we had.' He met a great variety of people in India and felt Calcutta was the intellectual capital of India. 'In Bombay there is one man – Jinnah', he told Montagu; 'At the root of Jinnah's activities is ambition. He believes that when Mrs Besant and Tilak have disappeared, he will be the leader, and he is collecting round him a group of young men whom he says he is keeping from revolutionary movements and professes a great influence over them.'[71] If the mantle of Tilak – whom Montagu considered 'the most powerful man in India', who was 'one of the leaders of Indian opinion' and to be sure 'is the leader of the opposition' – had fallen over Jinnah it would have been the most propitious thing for Jinnah's political future.[72] Tilak died in August 1920, but Jinnah did not succeed him.

Events had overtaken Jinnah. Until 1920 or so, Jinnah continued to be a moderate liberal politician. Even in 1917–18, during Montagu's visit, the Indian middle classes were clamouring for radical reforms. Walker of the *Manchester Guardian* 'was frightfully impressed by the seething, boiling, political flood raging across the country'. He pointed out that 'These men [Indians] are sick and tired of being a subject race. They want to hold up their heads like men and walk their own streets free and honourably, not as subjects of white men'.[73] The seething, boiling, political environment described by Walker existed much before General Dyer's massacre of defenceless men and women at the Jallianwalla Bagh. It is amazing how Jinnah had failed to gauge the mood of the nation. As a moderate politician his domain of activities was confined to high politics and high-status elite society, but the days of moderate politics were long past. Although Jinnah had opposed the Rowlatt Bill and condemned the imposition of martial law and indiscriminate firing resulting in the massacre at Jallianwalla Bagh in 1919 in Amritsar, the people in the country were in rebellion and demanding political action.[74] Gandhi's call for a mass movement against what he picturesquely termed the 'Satanic Government' was received with an overwhelming response both in the Congress and the country at large. Jinnah's voice pleading for moderation at the Congress session in Calcutta in 1920 was drowned by deafening applause supporting Gandhi's resolution for non-cooperation against the British Raj. Gandhi also promised swaraj in one year if the Indian people fought for it through non-violence. Jinnah disagreed: 'With great respect for Gandhi and those who think alike with him, I make bold to say in this Assembly that you will not get independence without bloodshed.'[75] These were Jinnah's ominous but prophetic words. Jinnah thereafter resigned from the Congress.

Thus ended Jinnah's hopes and ambition to lead an Indian political movement under the aegis of the Congress. Gandhi overshadowed Jinnah, who never reconciled himself to Gandhi's leadership. Jinnah was marginalized from mainstream politics. He never forgave Gandhi for this. It must be pointed out that Gandhi revolutionized the nature of the Indian nationalist movement and, if politics implied acquisition of power from the British Raj, Gandhi showed the way; it could only be acquired through a nationwide organization and through mass agitation marshalling national strength, derived from the grass roots; from the villages, from the peasants and the toiling classes, from the rich and the poor, one and all. In fact, the movement of 1920–21 turned out to be one of epic proportions bringing about a sea change in Indian politics. Durga Das, who claims to have interviewed Jinnah after the Calcutta meeting of the Congress in 1920, notes Jinnah having said: 'I will have nothing to do with the Congress and Gandhi. I don't believe in whipping up mass hysteria. Politics is a gentleman's game.'[76] Jinnah was also critical of Gandhi's 'pseudo-religious movement' as he termed the non-cooperation movement. In retrospect, it

seems ironic that Jinnah whipped up mass hysteria by adopting a religious slogan like 'Islam in danger' in the 1940s, ultimately creating Pakistan, a separate homeland for Muslims. It is also an irony that Jinnah was close to Tilak, who was an orthodox Hindu, and who had opposed all his life Hindu social reform. Gandhi was in many ways a social rebel, although deeply religious.

The main rationale behind Jinnah's political action after 1920, apart from his belief in constitutional method and 'gentlemanliness' in politics, is to be found in his political ambition to be the foremost leader at any cost. When he failed to win over the Congress he moved towards the Muslim League, slowly but surely to gain what he wanted most: power, position, influence and prestige.

Chagla, an observer of men and affairs, a barrister who rose to be a judge of the Bombay High Court in 1941, and later its chief justice, and who in the early days of his legal practice was pretty close to Jinnah, has this to say:

> Jinnah's besetting fault was his obsessive egoism. He has to be a leader, and the prime mover in whatever cause he works. With the emergence of Gandhiji in Indian politics Jinnah felt that his influence would gradually diminish. Jinnah was the complete anti-thesis of Gandhiji . . . Gandhiji believed in religion, in abstract moral values, in non-violence; Jinnah only believed in hard practical politics. Even saratorically it was impossible for him to subscribe to Gandhiji's view. He couldn't possibly give up his faultlessly tailored suits and his high collars for the simple khadi which Gandhiji wanted.[77]

Shiva Rao maintains that 'his vanity was hurt' by the preference shown by Gandhi and other Congress leaders to the Ali brothers and Muslim leaders like Dr Ansari and Hakim Ajmal Khan in the 1920s.[78] Jinnah also felt slighted by young leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru who did not pay the same respect to him as they did to Gandhi.[79] B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, author of the *History of the Indian National Congress*, points out that considerable jealousy and heartburning was caused when Gandhi's ascendancy was confirmed in 1920.[80]

H.V. Hodson, the author of the *Great Divide*, was Reforms Commissioner under Lord Linlithgow, but before joining him he had been asked to visit India during Christmas 1938. He had then met Gandhi, whom he called 'the other Governor-General of India' and Jinnah, along with others. He notes: 'I saw Jinnah, a conceited person, afraid that events may lose him the power that he craves.'[81] Quite clearly, Jinnah's ambitious tryst with destiny had not declined; if anything, he was more eager for power before time ran out for him. Along with incisive observations about the Indian

political scenario, Hodson notes that the Muslim League had already fanned the bogey of 'Hindu Raj' under Jinnah's leadership. 'The Muslim League is first and foremost communal and can never be anything else', he reported.[82]

A confidential report prepared by the US Secret Agency, OSS Report 112, notes that Jinnah suffered from 'exaggerated egoism'. It points out: 'He is sensitive to slight and extremely conscious of his personal dignity.' Jinnah also enjoyed the pomp and pageantry of the Muslim League meetings. On 3 April 1942, when the Muslim League Conference was held at Allahabad, 'he entered the city in state. There were 110 arches depicting Islamic history beginning with first Muslim Sultan of the land and ending with Jinnah. At the large gathering, in the atmosphere of pageantry, light, oratory and excitement his name was taken in the line of the Prophet and the Ansar saints.'[83]

Lord Wavell was friendly and accommodating to Jinnah and supported the Muslim League in its claim for being the representative of the Muslims, yet he disagreed with Jinnah on many points. What struck him most was Jinnah's intransigence at a most crucial juncture. The Simla Conference was a failure, mainly because of Jinnah's inflexible attitude. Wavell wrote to L.S. Amery, the Secretary of State for India on 15 July 1945: 'Jinnah is narrow and arrogant and is actuated mainly by fear and distrust of the Congress. Like Gandhi he is constitutionally incapable of friendly cooperation with other party.'[84]

Jinnah found Gandhi truly insufferable. Wyatt comments: 'Naturally Jinnah hated Gandhi. He referred to him as that Gandhi fellow who sits behind the scenes and pulls the strings and never comes into the open.' It seems Jinnah was tired of Gandhi's 'evasiveness and double talk [which] prevented headway being made with him over anything concrete. Jinnah stuck to his simple demand, that is of Pakistan, which rallied and held steady the Muslims.' Jinnah was also jealous and resentful of Gandhi who was treated better than him. Wyatt tells us: 'He [Jinnah] also resented the inference he drew from the British treatment of Gandhi that the Hindu leader was considered to be greater and more important than Jinnah. I did not get special trains. I would not mind being imprisoned in the Aga Khan Palace like Gandhi for a year or two if it were necessary to get Pakistan.'[85] Jinnah attacked the Congress and Gandhi, bitterly 'letting loose malicious propaganda'. How could there be a meaningful cooperation between them? Beverley Nichols said it was the 'hate' and 'inferiority complex' of the Muslims which founded Pakistan: 'Pakistan is founded no less on fear – fear of Hindu domination, fear of Hindu exploitation, fear of Hindu absorption. It is an empire founded on an inferiority complex.'[86] In fact, Gandhi at one point in time felt that Jinnah did not want to negotiate with the Congress; he wanted to take Pakistan from the British.[87]

Jinnah considered Jawaharlal Nehru with a certain degree of antipathy. He called him 'an impossible visionary who has no conception of what politics meant'.[88] Similarly, Nehru described Jinnah as 'a man full of arrogance and pomposity'; 'essentially uncultured', almost illiterate. He thought Jinnah's reading never extended beyond the daily newspapers and that he had 'not a single intelligent or enlightened idea in his head.'[89] Chagla also believed that Jinnah's range of interest was limited. He was after all not a man of learning. He had never entered the portal of a college or a university which could have broadened his mental horizon or vision. Jinnah's achievement was great in his own field, that is as an advocate at the Bar. Chagla says: 'I don't think he ever read a serious book in all his life. His staple food was newspapers, briefs and law books. But I have never come across any man who had less humanity in his character than Jinnah. He was cold and unemotional and apart from law and politics he had no other interest.'[90]

Motilal Setalvad, an eminent jurist of Bombay, was the son of the famed Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, who as a young lawyer came into contact with Jinnah and appeared in one or two cases under him against his own father. The younger Setalvad writes about Jinnah in his autobiography: 'He always had a kind of assertiveness and arrogance in him, which greatly increased after his return from his short term of practice in the Privy Council. When one appeared against him, one had to carefully scrutinize his statements both as to the allegations in the affidavits and in regard to law, which often turned out incorrect. When I appeared against him and he made a general statement, I always interrupted and asked him as to which paragraph of the affidavit he referred and if he was stating the effect of a section or a case, asked him what section he was thinking of or what case he had in mind. Very often one did not get a straight answer.'[91] Setalvad states that Jinnah had the reputation of being a very clear-headed man and an excellent advocate but not great in law: 'On a number of occasions on Chamber days, Jinnah and I were the opponents in most of the matters having as many as 25 or 28 applications out of a total of 33 or 35 in the court.'[92] These experiences reflected Jinnah's inability to grapple with some legal adversaries like Motilal Setalvad for whom Jinnah showed great respect. Besides, owing to his political activities, he appeared less often in the courts.

And Jinnah's attitude towards Hindus was sometimes reflected in simplistic ways. Woordrow Wyatt, a friend of Jinnah, who claimed to have drafted the Muslim League resolution of June 1946, was a party in the political game of demands and counter-demands. He often argued with Jinnah, cajoling him to stick to his guns in respect of the demand for Pakistan. In one of his incisive observations he remarks: 'Jinnah was anxious not to be drawn into arguments because Hindus were cleverer than the Muslims and would snare them into contradictory and intellectually shaky

positions.'[93] Such myths abound about the superiority of Hindu brains, and it is indeed most astonishing that Jinnah should have formed such impressions: often he brushed aside opponents' viewpoints when he found himself weak in arguments. Perhaps he formed these opinions based on his experience in the Bombay court, about which Setalvad gives some hints. Much later, Sir Francis Mudie, the Governor of Sind, is reported to have observed: 'In judging Jinnah, we must remember what he was up against. He had against him not only the wealth and brains of the Hindus but also nearly the whole of the British officialdom.'[94] Jinnah hated Gandhi, so did Woodrow Wyatt and Lord Wavell. All of them used to observe that Gandhi was at his 'old tricks' whenever they were unable to follow him, and were furious to find that each statement of Gandhi, according to them, was capable of being interpreted differently. Wyatt and Wavell agreed that 'Jinnah was the straightest and easiest of all the Indian politicians to deal with.'[95]

Returning to some of the important events of 1930, it must be mentioned that Gandhi had decided to break the salt law and launch the Civil Disobedience Movement, beginning with the famous Dandi March in March–April 1930. That year, India was in a turmoil owing to the mass movement of gigantic proportions unprecedented in the history of Indian nationalism. Jinnah and the Muslim League leaders remained outside this nationalist upsurge, the Muslim League in fact pledging support to the government in all the provinces. While the government was grappling with the problem of initiating peace negotiations with Gandhi, the first Round Table Conference was opened by King George V in November 1930. Sir Muhammad Shafi, the Aga Khan and Jinnah attended the conference on behalf of the Muslims. Speaking at the conference, Jinnah stated: 'As to the question of parties there are four main parties sitting round the table now. They are the British party, the Indian princes, the Hindus and the Muslims.'[96] For the first time, Jinnah spoke of Muslims as a party. Earlier the Muslim League had asked for special safeguards, protection of Muslim interests and needs, but thereafter it was going to be different. The following year, Lord Irwin entered into a pact with the Congress known as the Gandhi–Irwin Pact and Gandhi withdrew the Civil Disobedience Movement and agreed to attend the second Round Table Conference to be held in London from September until December 1931. With the arrival of Gandhi, 'Jinnah's role was much diminished from what it had been the previous year. All eyes were on Gandhi in 1931, for he was the voice of the Congress in every committee as well as the plenary session where he spoke.'[97]

Gandhi was the last to address the conference on 1 December 1931. Gandhi declared:

> All the parties at this meeting represent sectional interests, Congress alone claims to represent the whole of India, all interests. It is no communal organization; it is a determined enemy of

> communalism in any shape or form...And yet here I see that Congress is treated as one of the Parties... The Congress is the only all-Indiawide national organization bereft of any communal basis. Believe me that problems exists here... I repeat that so long as the wedge in the shape of foreign rule divides community from community, and class from class, there will be no real living solution, there will be no living friendship between these communities... Were Hindus and Muslims and Sikhs always at war with one another when there was no British rule, when there was no English face seen there...? This quarrel is not old; the quarrel is coeval with this acute shame. I dare to say that it is coeval with the British advent.[98]

Jinnah was present at the meeting and he felt gloomy about the outcome of the conference and remarked in his uncharitable way about Gandhi and his speech: 'The British will make a fool of him and he will make a fool of them.'[99] For the next Round Table Conference, Jinnah was not an invitee. He felt mortified. Chagla noted: 'He was beginning to be considered a man of little consequence so much so that he could not find a place in the Third Round Table Conference.'[100] A measure of Jinnah's discomfiture is to be found when he decided to leave India for good and settle down in England starting his practice at the Privy Council with a hope that he would be invited to sit on the Judicial Committee as a judge. When finally a judge was appointed, it was M.R. Jayakar, the Liberal and Hindu Sabha leader and his arch-rival at the Bombay Bar.[101] Jayakar had earned fame in the appellate side whereas Jinnah was largely on the original side. Jinnah waited for seven years to reply to Gandhi; and meanwhile he even contemplated returning to India after his Privy Council escapade, having failed to bring results.[102] He used his talent and energy to gain entry into Indian politics again from the communal platform (see Chapter 2).

While in London between 1931 and 1934, practising in the Privy Council, Durga Das asked him if he had retired from the politics of India. Jinnah replied: 'I came away to London because I did not want to meet that wretched Viceroy Willingdon with whom I had quarrelled when he was Governor of Bombay. I was hurt, besides, when my very reasonable proposal at the Calcutta All-Parties convention were turned down by Motilal Nehru and his lot. I seem to have reached a dead end.'[103] More incisive and pertinent was his observation: 'The Congress will not come to terms with me because my following is small. The Muslims don't accept my views for they take their orders from the Deputy Commissioners (district authority).' Jinnah's political future seemed to have been in the doldrums. 'But his Privy Council experience did not prove encouraging' and the inauguration of the Government of India Act 1935 appeared to revive his interest in Indian politics. Meanwhile, his loyal and steadfast

supporter Liaquat Ali Khan was in London trying to persuade him to return to India.[104]

Around this period Muslim politics were in a state of flux. The Aga Khan and Fazli Husain were at the helm of affairs along with Muhammad Shafi, who promised support to the British government in India, getting ample rewards in return. Both Sir Muhammad Shafi who was the law member (1924–28) and Fazli Husain were members of the Governor-General's Executive Council. They were against the demand for Pakistan, which had aroused some interest.[105] If Durga Das is to be believed on the basis of Fazli Husain's confidential talk with him, 'Those who fathered the idea of Pakistan in the early thirties had been financed by the British Intelligence in London.'[106] There were no takers for the idea then. Sir Mohammed Zafrullah Khan had dismissed the idea as 'chimerical'.[107] But the Aga Khan had made a vague reference to Pakistan as a means of safeguarding Muslim interest in a democratic system in India. The Aga Khan was financing the Unionist Party in the Punjab, the All India Muslim Conference and the Proja Krishak Party of Fazlul Haq in Bengal. Jinnah would have to fight them when he landed in India. He intensely disliked them 'including this fellow, Aga Khan and Fazl's dog'.[108] Jinnah not only disliked the Hindu leaders, including Gandhi and those of the Indian National Congress, but he was equally allergic to all those who were a threat to his supremacy in Muslim politics. Fortunately for Jinnah, most of the Muslim leaders like Fazli Husain, Sir Mohammed Shafi and Sir Sikander Hyat Khan either disappeared or soon died.[109] Those who opposed Jinnah's leadership and the demand for Pakistan as an essential plank of Muslim League policy were outmanoeuvred and forced to resign – Fazlul Huq in Bengal, Allah Baksh in Sind and Khizr Hyat Khan Tiwana of Punjab. Jinnah's star was ascending from 1937 onwards. He discarded Western clothes for the Punjabi *salwar* and *sherwani* and Jinnah cap. In 1940, the famous resolution for Pakistan was passed under the presidentship of Jinnah by the Muslim League in Lahore. The British support for the Pakistan idea at this time was fairly unambiguous. Jinnah pledged full support to the British for the war effort and the British rewarded Jinnah in return. It was reciprocal.

In the 1930s, British policy had also undergone dramatic changes. The British had begun to think of the Muslim question in terms of their own safety. Sir Brojendra Mitter, law member in the Governor-General's Executive Council was a contemporary of Fazli Husain, who had joined the council in 1930 as a member. Fazli Husain talked of creating Muslim majority zones as a counterpoise to Hindu majority zones. Mitter felt that 'the British were trying to build up a new power triangle designed to retain hold in India. They contemplated division of India into Hindu, Muslim and princely domains in the belief that the pro-British Muslims and princes would outvote the nationalist Hindus in a Federal set-up . . . The

whole attempt of the new plan is to break the back of the Congress. I do not agree with these Congress fellows but I find the conspiracy is to weaken the Hindu community and forge an Anglo-Muslim alliance to hold the Hindus down.'[110] The move did not gain immediate acceptance, but the tilt towards Muslims was obvious.

Although Fazli Husain was against the Pakistan idea because it would hurt Punjab most, both economically and politically, he was interested in maintaining the coalition government to safeguard landed interests. According to Mitter, the British thought of even promoting communal clashes to retain control of the country.[111] Such an idea, however preposterous, did filter down from above, especially after Gandhi's Civil Disobedience Movement which had shaken the empire and had forced Lord Irwin, then Viceroy, to recognize Congress as a vital force in Indian politics and come to terms with it by signing the Gandhi–Irwin Pact of 1931. After this, however, the pledges given by the government were broken by Samuel Hoare, the Secretary of State for India, and Lord Willingdon, the Viceroy, who used ordinances 'to smash the Congress'. The Prime Minister's letter of 13 March 1932 seemed to question the wisdom of these measures and declared that 'the knockout blow will come from their removal, province after province. If at the end of six months, the Government of India simply says it must have the renewal of ordinances there will be a very strong reaction here and the effect on some foreign countries [meaning USA] will be serious.'[112] The Viceroy asked Harry Haig to draft a reply, in which he said: 'I do not underestimate the embarrassments that our present action may cause in England and if there were any other means of dealing with the Congress we should have been too glad to adopt them. When the foundations of government are threatened and very seriously threatened, we must do what is possible to protect them and to ensure if we can, that they remain safe.'[113] In the same letter he stated: 'At the moment we are in a strong position because the army and the police and a large section of the population, including probably the majority of the Muslims, believe that we shall persist in our struggle with civil disobedience. But it will take little to shake that confidence, and the results of its being shaken might be very formidable.'[114] It was against this background that the Willingdon government went all out to woo the Muslims through the Muslim League.

After Jinnah returned from England in late 1934, he began paying attention to the affairs of the Muslim League, which were in disarray. By 1936, Jinnah had organized the Muslim League in a different mould. Jinnah stood head and shoulders above other Muslim League leaders, both in the quality of his mind and as a politician. He was more advanced than most. Besides, he had spurned the lure of office, to which temptation others had easily succumbed. As a consequence, Jinnah was considered a man of integrity and honesty by the people in general and Muslims in

particular. To cope with the Congress organization it was essential that he acquired a mass backing of the Muslims for his Muslim League, which so far had been dominated by the *nawabs* (muslim princes), *taluqdars* (landowners) and big landed interest. Jinnah did not want to come into confrontation with this powerful landed gentry, which had gained legitimacy under British patronage. Therefore, he sought its help in the first instance and offered the annual presidentship of the Muslim League to Sir Fazli Husain, who was his arch-enemy, in January 1936. In his letter to Fazli Husain he was apologetic and tried to placate him with platitudes. At the same time, Jinnah mentioned that other names were being considered since it was believed that Fazli Husain might not agree to the request. Meanwhile, before waiting for Fazli Husain's reply, Jinnah received telegrams from his admirers that he himself should take up the presidentship. Jinnah readily obliged them by accepting the proposal and that is how he was made President of the League in 1936.[115] He continued to hold this position until he died. He also got the League constitution changed and acquired the power of nominating all members of the working committee. Fazli Husain was the leader of his own party, the Unionist Party of the Punjab, and he was not keen to burden himself with unnecessary responsibilities but Jinnah did not wait for his reply. He captured the organization by outmanoeuvring his rival. Fortunately for Jinnah, Fazli Husain died in July 1936.

Once he took up the reins of the Muslim League as an unquestioned leader, he rode roughshod over all opposition and dissent inside the organization. Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, the successor of Fazli Husain, was equally opposed to Jinnah. Jinnah forced him to resign from the Muslim League working committee in 1941 and he died in December 1942. Had he remained alive he would have removed Punjab from Jinnah's leadership and the idea of Pakistan might have changed to something different. But Jinnah's encounter with Sikander Hyat Khan is revealing for several reasons, not the least being Jinnah's arrogance and impatience with powerful colleagues of the stature of Sir Sikander. The same traits were shown in the overthrow of Khizr Hyat Khan Tiwana, the next premier of the Punjab in March 1947. Khizr Hayat Khan had mentioned in confidence to Sir Evan Jenkins, the Governor of Punjab, that 'it is commonly said that Muslim League will murder him [Khizr Hayat Khan] as soon as they are in power. Jinnah is an extremely vindictive person.'[116] Similarly, when Begum Shah Nawaz and Sir Sultan Ahmed refused to resign from the Viceroy's defence council in August 1941, Jinnah expelled them from the Muslim League for five years. In his *Id* speech, in October 1941, Jinnah warned: 'Moslem India from one end to another demonstrated that it is solidly behind the Muslim League. I hope in future our opponents will learn that it is futile to attempt to create disruption in our ranks.'[117] A similar fate awaited Fazlul Haq. He accepted Jinnah's directive, yet he stated:

'Recent events have forcibly brought home to me that the principles of democracy and autonomy in the All India Muslim League are being subordinated to the arbitrary wishes of a single individual, who seeks to rule as an omnipotent authority even over the destiny of 33 millions of Muslims in the province of Bengal, who occupy the key position in Indian Muslim politics.'[118]

Jinnah's high-sounding statements sometimes appear so comic, yet during the days of communalization of politics in India they appeared to be of significance. Addressing the Muslim League meeting in Madras, Jinnah said on 13 April 1941 of the achievements of the Muslim League: 'Since the fall of the Mughal Empire, I think I am right in saying that Muslim India was never so well organized and so alive and so politically conscious as it is today.'[119]

Another incident exemplifies the way Jinnah's mind worked, in respect of acquisition of position, power and authority for himself. The British Cabinet decided to have one Governor-General for India and Pakistan for the interim period ending in June 1948 to enable the smooth transfer of power and assets. When the Congress agreed to have Lord Mountbatten as the Governor-General in India after independence, it was assumed that Jinnah would also accept the proposal. When Jinnah was asked for his approval, he kept quiet until July 1947 and then pointed out that his people wanted him to be the Governor-General of Pakistan. A very embarrassing situation arose and the British Cabinet had to seek the permission of the King, to approve Jinnah's self-appointment as Governor-General.[120] Afterwards, Mountbatten told Jinnah that he had 'chosen the wrong thing. The man you want to be is the Prime Minister, he runs the country'. 'Not in my Pakistan', Jinnah said, 'there the Prime Minister will do what the Governor-General tells him.' 'So I [Mountbatten] said that is the reverse of the whole British concept of democracy.' 'Nevertheless, that is the way I am going to run Pakistan', said Jinnah.[121]

Thus, Jinnah appointed himself Governor-General of Pakistan. Z.H. Zaidi, chief editor of the *Jinnah Papers*, has rationalized Jinnah's action on the ground that Mountbatten, allegedly being under the influence of Jawaharlal Nehru, could not be trusted to be fair and impartial; and that Jinnah was a great democrat and constitutionalist although rather autocratic in some ways.[122] Jinnah in fact was motivated more by the example of the Mughal emperors rather than by democracy or the British constitutional practice. He often talked of the emperors, as expressed by Lord Wavell in his interviews with him. However, just three months before Jinnah died, on 16 June 1948, he addressed the officers of the Quetta staff college, pointing out that the Governor-General was the executive head in Pakistan: 'I want you to remember and if you have time enough, you should study the Government of India Act, as adopted for use in Pakistan, which is our present constitution; that the executive authority flows from the

head of the Government of Pakistan, who is the Governor-General and therefore any command or orders may come to you cannot come without the sanction of the executive head.'[123]

Thus, Jinnah maintained full control of the government of Pakistan. He was not a constitutional head but a real source of power and authority. M.R.A. Baig, one time close associate of Jinnah, writes: 'Supremely confident of himself, Mr Jinnah was more a dictator than a leader.'[124] Ram Manohar Lohia, a contemporary politician and freedom fighter attended a Muslim League meeting presided over by Jinnah. The year was probably 1946. He has recorded:

> The one occasion when I listened to Mr Jinnah was at the meeting of the annual conference of the Muslim League. This meeting has left a profound impression on me. Mr. Jinnah sat, looked and spoke like a king and his listeners watched him and listened to him as though he was their own chosen king. I have nowhere seen greater hypnosis in all my life than at Hitler's meetings and this was something different... There was a natural bond, not too explosive but also not easily shakeable between Mr. Jinnah and his crowd, as though between a king and his subjects. There was also a certain primitive dislike of the stranger, I remember having felt very uncomfortable in this meeting. There were daggers in the eyes of those who looked at me, infidel of faith and of politics, or at least so I thought.[125]

This was the legacy Jinnah had left, the baneful effect of which the people of India and Pakistan are experiencing even today. The legacy was despotism and dictatorship for Pakistan and a point of no return in communal consciousness among the people of the two neighbouring countries.

Notes

1 M.C. Chagla, *Roses in December: An Autobiography* (Bombay: 1973), p. 25.
2 Hector Bolitho, *Jinnah: Creator of Pakistan* (London: 1956, first published 1954).
3 Ibid., p. 103.
4 Ibid., p. 102.
5 Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, *Pakistan at a Glance* (Bombay: 1941); *Jinnah on Pakistan* (Bombay: 1943); *Leaders' Correspondence with Jinnah* (Bombay: 1944); *Evolution of Pakistan* (Karachi: 1962); *Quaid-i-Azam's Correspondence* (Karachi: 1966).
6 Aziz Beg, *Jinnah and His Times: A Biography* (Islamabad: 1986).
7 M.H. Saiyid, *Mohammed Ali Jinnah: A Political Study* (Lahore: 1945). The biography is truly political. Not a word is mentioned about Jinnah's personal life including his marriage.
8 *Mohammed Ali Jinnah: An Ambassador of Unity: His Speeches and Writings, 1912–1917*, with a biographical appreciation by Sarojini Naidu (Madras: n.d.).
9 Ibid., p. 1.

10 Beg, *Jinnah and His Times*, p. 91.
11 Ibid., p. 92.
12 Ibid., p. 92.
13 Bolitho, *Jinnah*, pp. 4–5.
14 Ibid., p. 6.
15 Chagla, *Roses in December*, p. 55.
16 Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, *Some Aspects of Quaid-i-Azam's Life* (Islamabad: 1978). For controversy about the date of birth and a discussion, pp.1–7.
17 Bolitho, *Jinnah*, p. 7.
18 Ibid. Also see Beg, *Jinnah and His Times*, p. 102.
19 Sir Khwaza Nazimuddin in foreword, p. ix, Saiyid, *Mohammad Ali Jinnah: A Political Study*.
20 Chagla, *Roses in December*, p. 54.
21 Ibid.
22 B. Shiva Rao, *India's Freedom Movement: Some Notable Figures* (Delhi: 1972), p. 125.
23 Ibid.
24 Bolitho, *Jinnah*, pp. 91–2.
25 Chagla, *Roses in December*, p. 120.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid., pp. 117–18.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid., p. 120.
30 Ibid., p. 121.
31 Bolitho, *Jinnah*, p. 75.
32 Ibid., p. 78.
33 K.L. Gauba, *Friends and Foes: An Autobiography* (Delhi: 1974), p. 155.
34 Ibid.
35 Woodrow Wyatt, *Confessions of an Optimist* (London: 1985), p. 131.
36 Beg, *Jinnah and His Times*, p. 134.
37 Kanji Dwarkadas, *Ruttie Jinnah: The Story of a Great Friendship* (Bombay: n.d.).
38 Woodrow Wyatt, *Confessions*, p. 131.
39 Dwarkadas, *Ruttie Jinnah*, p. 41.
40 Ibid., pp. 38–9.
41 Bolitho, *Jinnah*, p. 92. This was based on his interview with Dewan Chaman Lall.
42 Durga Das, *India from Curzon to Nehru and After* (London: 1969), p. 154.
43 Chagla, *Roses in December*, pp. 79–80.
44 Durga Das, *India from Curzon*, p. 155.
45 John Evelyn Wrench, *Immortal Years as Viewed from Five Continents, 1937–44* (London: 1945), p. 133.
46 Dwarkadas, *Ruttie Jinnah*, p. 60.
47 Wyatt, *Confessions*, p. 137.
48 Chagla, *Roses in December*, p. 119.
49 Stanley Wolpert, *Jinnah of Pakistan* (New York: 1984), p. 130. Wolpert had interviewed Begum Liaquat Ali Khan at her residence in Karachi in 1980.
50 John Gunther, *Inside Asia* (London: 1939), p. 510 .
51 See Leonard Berkowitz, 'Simple Views of Aggression', in Ashley Montagu (ed.), *Man and Aggression* (New York: 1973), p. 49.
52 Hermann Helmuth, 'Human behaviour', in Montagu, *Man and Aggression*, p. 106.
53 Sally Carrighar, 'War is not in our Genes', in Montagu, *Man and Aggression*, pp. 103–4.
54 Berkowitz, 'Simple View of Aggression', p. 52.

55 Wrench, *Immortal Years*, p. 132.
56 Beg, *Jinnah and His Times*, pp. 101–2.
57 Bolitho, *Jinnah*, p. 147.
58 Ibid., p. 161.
59 Bhikhu Parekh, *Colonialism, Tradition and Reform: An Analysis of Gandhi's Political Discourse* (Delhi: 1989), pp. 172–206.
60 Beg, *Jinnah and His Times*, p. 147.
61 Wyatt, *Confessions*, p. 147.
62 Erik Erikson, *Gandhi's Truth: On the Origins of Militant Non-violence* (New York: 1969).
63 Wyatt, *Confessions*, p. 147.
64 Ibid.
65 Sir William Widderburn (1838–1918), judge, Bombay High Court, acting chief secretary to government of Bombay; twice President of the Indian National Congress, in 1889 and 1910.
66 Chagla, *Roses in December*, p. 14.
67 Edwin Samuel Montagu, *An Indian Diary*, ed. Venetia Montagu (London: 1930), p. 57.
68 Ibid., p. 57; also p. 140.
69 Ibid., p. 58.
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid., 29 November 1917, p. 67.
72 Ibid., pp. 373–4.
73 Ibid., p. 86.
74 In December 1917, a committee headed by Justice Rowlatt was appointed to review the situation arising out of the expiry of the Defence of India Act at the end of the First World War. Under the act the government was armed with enormous powers to deal with what it termed 'conspiracy and political outrage' in the country. On the recommendation of the Rowlatt Committee the government introduced a bill, dubbed Rowlatt Bill in the Central Legislative Council, which was passed with 35 members voting for and 20 against. The voting showed that almost all Indian members had voted against. After Lord Chelmsford, the Governor-General, assented, the bill became law in March 1919. The Rowlatt Act empowered the government to deal with revolutionary, seditious and political crimes in an exceptional manner. The suspects were to be tried in a court consisting of three judges sitting in camera, without juries and without the assistance of defence counsel. Also, the suspects could be arrested and kept in non-penal custody without trial. The law was to be in force for three years.

Indian public opinion was outraged by such a draconian law. Gandhi denounced the act as an instrument of distrust, repression and terror and called for a nationwide strike, asking the members of the bar in the country to abstain from work in courts. This was known as Rowlatt Satyagraha, about which Judith Brown writes in graphic detail in her book *Gandhi's Rise to Power: Indian Politics 1915–1922* (Cambridge: 1972), ch. 5.

On 13 April 1919, as a sequel to the call to strike by Gandhi, a crowd of about 10,000 collected inside Jallinanwalla Bagh, a walled-in open space at Amritsar. Brigadier-General Dyer stationed his Gurkha troops at the gate, and ordered firing on the crowd without warning and until the ammunition exhausted. According to official estimate 378 people died and more than 2,000 were wounded. The whole of Punjab was in turmoil thereafter. Martial law was imposed, public flogging was carried out and the notorious 'crawling order' in Amritsar was enforced by the government under Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the

Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab. This event was, in more senses than one, a turning point in India. Gandhi began his non-cooperation Civil Disobedience Movement in 1921–22.

75 Durga Das, *India from Curzon*, p. 76.
76 Ibid.
77 Chagla, *Rose in December*, p. 79.
78 Rao, *India's Freedom Movement*, p. 126.
79 Ibid.
80 OSS Report 112, IOR/L/PJ/12/652. The report was dated 5 February 1943 and was prepared by US Secret Agency personnel, London.
81 V. Hodson's note of 6 January 1939, Lumley Papers, Mss. Eur. F. 253/44. Sir Roger Lumley was Governor of Bombay during Linlithgow's viceroyalty.
82 Ibid.
83 OSS Report 112, IOR/L/PJ/12/652.
84 Wavell to Amery, 15 July 1945; Wavell's note on the failure of the Simla Conference, para 10, Wavell Papers, Mss. Eur. D. 977/5.
85 Wyatt, *Confessions*, p. 132.
86 Beverley Nichols, *Verdict an India* (London: 1944), see chapter with the heading 'Hate founds an Empire', pp. 178–87. The quote is, however, in K.L. Gauba, *Friends & Foes: An Autobiography* (Delhi: 1974), p. 223. Gauba was a Cambridge educated barrister, son of the Punjabi industrialist, Har Kishen Lal. Gauba embraced Islam; was a friend of Jinnah.
87 OSS Report 112, IOR/LP/PJ/12/652; Gandhi in *Harijan*, November 1939.
88 Chagla, *Roses in December*, p. 79.
89 Ibid.
90 Ibid.
91 Motilal C. Setalvad, *My Life, Law and Other Things* (Bombay: 1971), p. 32.
92 Ibid.
93 Wyatt, *Confessions*, pp. 156–8.
94 Francis Mudie Papers, Mss. Eur. F. 164.
95 Quoted in Bolitho, *Jinnah*, p. 208.
96 Wolpert, *Jinnah of Pakistan*, p. 121.
97 Ibid., p. 127.
98 Ibid., p. 128.
99 Ibid.
100 Chagla, *Roses in December*, p. 80
101 Wolpert, *Jinnah of Pakistan*, p. 1 29.
102 Chagla, *Roses in December*, p. 103.
103 Durga Das, *India from Curzon*, p. 154.
104 Ibid., p. 155.
105 Rao, *India's Freedom Movement*, p. 127. Also Durga Das, *India from Curzon*, p. 154.
106 Durga Das, *India from Curzon*, p. 169.
107 Ibid.
108 Ibid., p. 155.
109 Sir Muhammad Shafi died in 1932, Sir Fazli Husain in 1936 and Sir Sikander Hyat Khan in December 1942.
110 Quoted in Durga Das, *India from Curzon*, p. 166.
111 Ibid.
112 The letter in question is available in the Haig Papers, Mss. Eur. F. 115/1 (on microfilm, NMML). The expressions 'smash the Congress' and 'knockout blow' appeared in the Prime Minister's letter.

113 Haig to Mieville, private secretary (PS) to Governor-General (GG), 13 April 1932, Haig Papers, Mss. Eur. F. 115/1 (NMML, on microfilm).
114 Ibid.
115 Jinnah to Fazli Husain, 5 January 1936, Jinnah's telegram (date illegible), accepts presidentship, Fazli Husain Papers, Mss. Eur. E. 352/17.
116 Evan Jenkins to Mountbatten, 15 May 1947, para 14, fortnightly reports, IOR/R/3/1/178 (London).
117 Wolpert, *Jinnah of Pakistan*, p. 193.
118 OSS Report 112, IOR/L/PJ/12/652.
119 Wolpert, *Jinnah of Pakistan*, p. 191.
120 Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, *Mountbatten and the Partition of India* (Delhi: 1982), pt I, p. 47.
121 Ibid.
122 Z.H. Zaidi (ed.), *Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah Papers 1947*, vol. III: *On the Threshold of Pakistan, 1 July – 25 July 1947*, app. III, Viceroy's personal report no. 11.
123 Wolpert, *Jinnah of Pakistan*, p. 361.
124 M.R.A. Baig, *Jinnah* (Patna: 1996), p. 7.
125 Ram Manohar Lohia, *Guilty Men of India's Partition* (Delhi: 1970), p. 37. It was first written as a review of Maulana Azad's *India Wins Freedom* (Bombay: 1959).

2

STORMING THE MUSLIM LEAGUE

Ideologically and politically the Muslim League, since its birth in 1906, remained a conservative body serving its own sectarian interests with an avowed objective of the protection and promotion of the religious, cultural and political rights of the Muslims. The memorial presented to Lord Minto, the Viceroy, in 1906 by the Muslim deputation in Simla desired that 'any kind of representation, direct or indirect, and in all other ways affecting their status and influence, should be commensurate not merely with the numerical strength but also with their political importance'. Political importance came to be defined, informally, as the past political position as the rulers of the land before the British conquest. In respect of the present and the future, a political relationship was to be forged between the Muslims and the British government, on the premise that the willing support and loyalty of the Muslims might serve as a bulwark to the onrush of nationalism in India as evidenced by the popular upsurge against the partition of Bengal of 1905. In actual fact, however, Muslim rights essentially meant upholding the interests of the upper-class Muslims at that point in time. With the growth of nationalist public opinion represented by the Indian National Congress, especially after the 1920s, the British began supporting the Muslim cause more systematically to counteract the influence of what they called 'the seditious Hindus' on the Indian masses.

The Aligarh session of the Muslim League in 1908 had stressed 'the vital importance of the adequate representation of Mohammedans as a distinct community'. The essence of these principles, that of 'political importance' and of 'a distinct community' remained a constant factor in the consciousness of the ruling oligarchy of Muslims so well entrenched in the Muslim League until 1935–36. The main thrust of the resolutions and Muslim demand for a separate identity militated against the ideal of common nationality. Besides, however fragile and distant the relationships between the communities of India might have been in the past, political unification, economic integration, a common and uniform system of law and administrative practices under the overall supervision and control of the British

bureaucracy, and a common army and police tended to forge unity among the people of India. Freedom of conscience and of religious worship, with freedom of expression and educational advancement embodying Western ideas of liberalism, humanism, liberty and equality came to be regarded as axiomatic with the British rule, however exploitative and racialist it might have been. Without going into the range of arguments, many sustainable and others unjustified, the fact remained that the Muslim League – by its very constitution, its aims and objects and its framework of reference – was determined to maintain the identity of Muslims as a separate religious and cultural community in contradistinction to the common national Indian identity. While no community wishes to be absorbed by the so-called majority community, that is Hindus in the case of India, there was ample room for the development and maintenance of this cultural and religious integrity within an emerging, strong, vibrant nationality irrespective of the differences of caste, creed, religion and sex. The political urges and aspirations of all could be met within the territorial concept of nationhood as advocated by the Indian National Congress. The Muslim League, by and large, remained focused in the accentuation and acceleration of its sectarian interests and demands in opposition to the mainstream politics fighting for freedom from alien rule.

For a brief interlude, however, a warm-hearted exchange of goodwill and give-and-take policy was witnessed between 1916 and 1928. The Lucknow Pact of 1916 brought the Congress and the League closer. During the Khilafat agitation a large section of Muslims participated in the non-cooperation movement of 1920–22. Attempts were made to forge unity of purpose and to enter into agreements to facilitate cooperation with an ultimate object of working out reforms for eventual self-government and the establishment of dominion status for India leading finally to complete independence. All Parties Conferences were held in 1927, 1928 and 1929 to formulate proposals for a constitution for India. The Nehru Report of 1928 was one such effort which was given a quiet burial after being rejected by the Muslim League in 1929.

The Nehru Report and the parting of the ways

The genesis of the Motilal Nehru Committee which drafted in 1928 the first constitution for India, commonly known as the Nehru Report, needs to be outlined. Lord Birkenhead, then Secretary of State for India, had observed that the Indian boycott of the Statutory Commission headed by Sir John Simon was unjustified because it was entrusted with providing a blue-print of a future constitution for India. He castigated Indians for their obstructionist attitude; Indians could never agree among themselves and draft a constitution for their own country; it was regrettable, he said, that they would not allow the British government to do so either. Irked by

such remarks, all parties in India, except a section of the Muslim League, agreed to meet at the All Parties Conference in May 1928 for deliberations on the subject. A committee with Motilal Nehru as chairman and Jawaharlal Nehru as secretary was formed. Another member of the committee was Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, a well-known jurist.

The All Parties Conference met at Lucknow in July 1928 to consider their draft report. Further deliberations were held in August. A national convention of the All Parties Conference was held at Calcutta in December 1928. Representatives of 87 parties attended the convention. There was general agreement on broad issues. Jinnah was the only important leader who objected to certain aspects of the report, drafted mainly by Motilal Nehru. The report provided for a strong centre, fully representative of all sections, and popular provincial governments with powers to legislate on all provincial subjects, the residuary subjects being vested in the centre. A Declaration of Rights for citizens was included and especial and separate electorates were dispensed with. Minority rights were protected by various safeguards. Younger leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose were unhappy that the report set dominion status and not complete independence from the Raj as the national goal.

It has been argued, mostly by historians and political scientists sympathetic to the Muslim League point of view, that the Nehru Report of 1928 was flawed and that the Indian National Congress was guilty of a breach of faith. The allegation rests on the premise that the Congress unilaterally did away with the concept of a separate electorate which had been the basis of agreement between the Muslim League and the Congress as evidenced by the Lucknow Pact of 1916.

This allegation is not based on fact and is misleading. It is necessary to take a closer look at what is known as the Delhi Muslim Proposals of 1927. These proposals were formulated by the Muslim Conference called by Jinnah and presided over by him on 20 March 1927. Most of the 'leading Muslim representatives' from all parts of the country, numbering 30, attended the conference and accepted the principle of a joint electorate, provided the provinces of Sind and the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) were created and reforms introduced therein. The conference agreed, first, to have a 'joint electorate in all provinces so constituted and are further willing to make to Hindu minorities in Sind, Baluchistan and the North-West Frontier Province the same concession the Hindu majorities in other provinces are prepared to make to Mohammedan minority'. Second, it was agreed 'in the Punjab and Bengal the proportion of representation should be in accordance with the population'. Third, it was agreed that 'in the Central Legislature, Mohammedan representation [was] not to be less than a third, and that also by a mixed electorate'.[1] In other words, showing rare enlightenment and foresight, the Muslim

leaders had agreed to give up the separate electorate in favour of a joint electorate both at the provinces and at the centre. Among the 30 prominent leaders were M.A. Jinnah, the raja of Mahamudabad, Sir Muhammad Shafi, Maulana Mohammad Ismail, Sir Mohammad Yakub, H.S. Suharawardy, Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan, Syed Ahmad Shah (imam of Jama Masjid, Delhi), Mohammad Shafee Daoodi, Abdul Matin Chaudhuri, Sir Zulfiquar Ali Khan and Sir Abdul Qayum Khan.[2]

At its meeting in December 1927, the All India Muslim League (AIML) endorsed the proposals and stated that 'Muslims will be prepared to abandon separate electorates in favour of joint electorate with reservation of seats fixed on the basis of the population of the different communities' subject to the 'requirement' that the provinces of Sind and NWFP would be formed and reforms introduced therein.[3]

Actually the process for the creation of the separate provinces of Sind and NWFP was already underway: these provinces were formed in 1936 and reforms were introduced in accordance with the Government of India Act 1935.

The most important issue in question was that of communal representation. It was accepted for the first time by the Muslim League that separate communal electorates militated against the concept of common nationality. The All Parties Conference, therefore, being confident of Muslim League support, introduced the concept of a joint electorate in the Nehru Report. After all, the formation of the provinces of Sind and North-West Frontier Province depended on the government and, though the issue was considered as important by the Muslim League, it was hardly a matter of paramount importance so as to contravene the principle of a joint electorate as agreed to by all. The All Parties Conference was also in full agreement with the Muslim League about the formation of these Muslim-majority provinces. There was no reservation whatsoever in respect of this issue on the part of the Indian National Congress either.

It was therefore a surprise when Mohammad Ali Jinnah issued his Fourteen Points, in which he reiterated the resolve of the Muslim League not to surrender 'this valued right'[4] of a separate electorate for Muslims in the provincial legislatures as well as the Central Legislature. The Muslim League led by Jinnah contended that the Indian National Congress had 'receded from the position adopted thereto' and virtually 'rejected' the Delhi Muslim Proposals.[5] He asserted that 'the League is, therefore, free to adopt such course with regard to the matter, and formulate such proposals as the League may think proper, to be incorporated in any future scheme of Constitution of the Government of India'.[6]

It was preposterous indeed that the Nehru Report should be rejected on such grounds. The fact was that the Muslim League wanted to wriggle out of the agreement, as incorporated in the Delhi Muslim Proposals.

One of the authors has pointed out that the Delhi Muslim Proposals were 'designed to humour the nationalist stance'.[7] He stressed further that Jinnah's Fourteen Points, in fact, helped 'to rehabilitate his credentials as an authentic Muslim leader, which had suffered considerably on account of his compromising stance on separate electorates in the Delhi Muslim Proposals'.[8] Thus Jinnah employed his 'legal brain'[9] to find fault with the Nehru Report and sabotage it. His amendments against the background of the Delhi Muslim Proposals were unwarranted especially when the question of separate electorates had been resolved. His other amendment, that the residuary powers must be vested in the provinces and not the centre, was meant to weaken the centre. The All Parties Conference had argued that India's past history showed ample evidence of fissiparous tendencies which had often threatened the Indian polity endangering its unity and integrity, and it was necessary to guard against such tendencies should India become independent in the near future. From the nationalist and broader perspective the rationale behind the Nehru Report could therefore be defended.[10] As for reservation of seats, it was pointed out that 'reservation to the fullest extent deprives mixed electorates in a considerable measure of their utility in promoting national unity'.[11]

When a new constitution was envisaged and all minds agreed that the villain of the piece was the communal electorate, which had accentuated bitterness between the two communities, then why not get rid of this malaise? Chagla, a member of the Muslim League and close to Jinnah, argued in a pamphlet *Muslims and the Nehru Report* that 'even without the amendments, the Nehru Report was not prejudicial to the interests of the Muslim community; and was a great document which served the national purposes of the country while safeguarding the rights of the minorities'.[12]

It seems Jinnah felt aggrieved when his amendments were rejected and said that it was 'the parting of ways' for him.[13] His observation was quite revealing and not surprising at all. The Nehru Report, he had stated in his Fourteen Points, 'can at best be treated as counter Hindu proposals to the Muslim Proposals'.[14] He considered the Nehru Report to be a 'Hindu' report. Months of labour were treated as a wasteful exercise. Around this period Jinnah had parted company with his wife, Ruttie. One of the grounds of separation, it was suspected, was Ruttie's belief in some aspects of Hinduism and its philosophical foundations.[15] Jinnah was a master tactician who used the Nehru Report to create misunderstandings and misgivings in the minds of the Muslims against the Congress. Later, in meeting after meeting, he reminded his Muslim audience how the Congress had dispensed with the time-honoured principle of separate electorates, disregarding Muslim public opinion because of a single objective of establishing Hindu hegemony over the Muslims.

Edwin Montagu had in 1917 noted the problems created by election through separate electorates when in discussion with Madhavarao, formerly Dewan of Mysore, Travancore and of Baroda:

> a Madrasi Brahmin of great experience . . . very voluble but talked sound sense. He argued fiercely against communal representation and said [it] served to accentuate and exasperate the feeling between Hinduism and Mohammedans. Of course, this is true, but to suggest that we should get rid of it now seems to me to be impossible. We are pledged up to the hilt and we would have a rising of the Mohammedans if we did . . .[16]

Jinnah seemed to have saved his skin and leadership by putting forward the Fourteen Points, which were adopted by the Muslim League. These continued to be the talking point at the Muslim League meetings as the Charter of the Rights of Muslims until 1937, when other grievances were invented in the Congress-ruled provinces after the Congress had won the election in 1937.

There is no doubt that many Muslim leaders did have reservations on the question of joint electorates as provided by the Nehru Report. On 10 September 1928, 28 Muslim members of the central and provincial legislatures issued a 'manifesto' expressing themselves against the report for its failure 'to provide safeguards for the protection of their interests . . . We want to make it clear that no Constitution can be acceptable to Musalmans unless it provides effective and adequate protection for their interests . . .'[17] A succinct reply was issued by another group of Muslim leaders supporting the Nehru Report recommendations. A comparative statement was prepared by them to show that the recommendations would safeguard the interests of Muslims in the Muslim-majority provinces even under the scheme of joint electorates. In fact, on the population basis only 55 per cent and 54 per cent of seats could be preserved in the Punjab and Bengal respectively, but without reservation more than 60 per cent seats could be won by the Muslims in these provinces. Besides, no bill regarding intercommunal matters could be introduced if three-quarters of either community affected opposed its introduction. It was also pointed out that these recommendations had been supported by the Muslim League, the Khilafat Committee and the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind.[18]

Full religious liberty (secured by the Declaration of Rights) and cultural autonomy had been provided for. In addition, special guarantees were provided for the educational and economic advancement of all underprivileged groups and communities.[19] Once the principle of joint electorates was accepted other steps followed, non-reservation of seats and weightage. Yet the report had recognized these matters and,

as yet, the question of suffrage had not been taken up so there was ample opportunity to further safeguard interests which might have militated against Muslim privileges. The rejection of the report was truly unexpected. Jinnah was out of the country for a while. After returning from overseas, on 26 October 1928 he said that he did not have 'enough time to thoroughly digest the Report' and that he could not 'anticipate the decision of the League'.[20] Yet the report was rejected soon after. Nothing untoward had happened between 1927 and 1929 to warrant a *volte-face* from Jinnah and the Muslim League. If they rescinded from their stand, it must have been because of ulterior designs and motivations.

Before proceeding to unravel the general concern displayed by the British government in India regarding the efficacy or justice of the Nehru Report, it is revealing to note that Sir John Simon, the chairman of the Simon Commission, had a favourable comment to make about it:

> But I must say that I do not think commentators in England have done justice in all cases to the earlier chapters of the All Parties Report. They are admirably written and preserve a very level and judicious tone. The chapter on communal difficulties seems to me an extremely clever piece of work with an excellent collection of pregnant facts. I suppose we shall find ourselves compelled to affirm communal representation just as Montagu did and I do not say that the Mohammedans have not a formidable case to make in its favour. But it is an abominable system which tends to breed the very disease which it is invented to cure.[21]

It is not widely known that Clement Attlee was a member of the Simon Commission and toured India in 1928. Another Labour leader, Lord Pethick-Lawrence, was on a visit to India as a private individual in 1929; he welcomed 'Motilal Nehru's Scheme'.[22]

When concerted steps were being taken at the All Parties Conference to bridge the gap between the Hindus and Muslims and to prepare a constitution acceptable to all, the Government of India (GOI) was visibly alarmed. During 1927 and 1929, Sir Malcolm Hailey, Governor of the Punjab 1924–28 and thereafter of UP until 1934, played a key role in the formulation of government policies, and was consulted on constitutional questions and the communal problem (which for Malcolm Hailey meant confirmation of separate electorates for Muslims) by Lord Lothian, Samuel Hoare, Wedgewood Benn, the chairman of the franchise committee, and others. The Delhi Muslim Proposals of March 1927, which suggested that joint electorates should be reintroduced, opened the floodgates of alarmist views from several quarters. Malcolm Hailey, proud to call himself 'an imperialist' to the core, got in touch with Muslims of different shades of

opinion and began influencing them. He informed F.H. Brown of *The Times*, London:

> I had a conversation the other day with Chaudri [*sic*] Zafrullah Khan and gave an indication of his views in the *Times* of Tuesday's. His insistence as representing the Muslim members of the Punjab Legislature, that there must be no substantial departure from the present system of separate electorate serves to discount Chimanlal Setalvad's argument that the separate electorates are at the root of existing troubles, and that the leaders on both sides are inclining to a system under which there would be reservation of a portion of seats for Mohammedans sent to the legislatures by joint electorate. We have here now Dr Shafaat Ahmed Khan representing the Moslem members of the UP Legislature using arguments similar to those of Zafrullah Khan. They claim to speak for all Mohammedans apart from a few irreconcilables and I take it that their claim is substantially correct.[23]

This is an indication of the truth of Hailey's claim that quite a few influential Muslim leaders had reservations regarding changing the pattern of electoral politics, although the Muslim League under Jinnah had approved of the Delhi Muslim Proposals in 1927 and was working for a compromise formula between the two communities during the greater part of 1928.

However, Hailey began espousing the cause of the 'communal electorate', referring to the pledge given by the British government, which had accepted the principle that the position of the Muslim community 'should be estimated not merely on your [Muslims] numerical strength but in respect to the political importance of your community and the services it has rendered to the Empire'.[24] He further emphasized that although 'the Montagu–Chelmsford report described communal representation as opposed to the teaching of history, perpetuating undesirable class divisions, the Congress League Pact could not be ignored. The franchise committee noted that the evidence received by it was unanimous in favour of communal electorates.'[25] It further opined 'that any departure from the terms of this concept would revive in an aggravated form a controversy which it has done much to compose'.[26] Hailey, therefore, was bound to be disturbed with the progress of events leading to a compromise between the two communities and he would do everything within his powers to keep them apart. He was determined to see that the 'Muslim bloc' remained in favour of British government: 'We could, as I have said, have carried a government on the Muslim plank without difficulty and a decision to do so would have bound the latter firmly to us.'[27] But he had maintained the semblance of balance, an appearance of justice and appointed Hindus too. However, various kinds of rewards were offered to

the Muslim community. When Hailey was Governor of the Punjab he saw to it that 'the great extension of irrigation' went into 'our Mohammadens districts [which] had improved their internal condition'.[28] This shows the depth of concern displayed by the British government to help the Muslim community gain material prosperity for their daily existence. Muslim leaders in general had supported the British wholeheartedly ever since the establishment of rapport with the Muslim League from 1906, except for a brief interlude in 1920–21, during the Khilafat agitation. Lord Willingdon, the Governor-General, believed that supporting the government was a great virtue and said that 'the Musalmans really seem to be the only people who have got any political sense at all and who do largely combine for their own political advantage'.[29]

Malcolm Hailey was not a man to rest in peace until he had opened up to those Muslim leaders who counted and who were likely to be against the Nehru Report. Fazli Husain was a Unionist leader, who worked for unity of purpose in provincial politics; but in matters concerning the political rights of Muslims he tended to be communal, unlike his successor, Sir Sikander Hyat Khan. Fazli Husain's note of 28 August 1930 to Viceroy Irwin states: 'The Muslims were not prepared to sacrifice their power, position and prestige and they would prefer the present [*sic*], no political advance outlined [even] in the Simon Report.'[30] Hailey wrote to Fazli Husain who was convalescing in Simla, enquiring about his health and seeking his views on a matter of importance:

> I wish I could have a talk with you about the Nehru Report. It is of course very obvious that it has an immediate bearing both on the position of the Musalmans here and on that of the land-owners. We may regard it not only as a dream of the future but it is at all events shown to both of them where they would stand if the Swarajist's and Nationalist's ideals could be translated into action. From their point of view it is an advantage, for it presents their ideas in a concrete form. In the UP we should probably have twelve or fifteen million voters, mainly tenants, so that landlords would be ousted from general constituencies and at the same time reserved seats would disappear. As for Musalmans they should be far more [*sic*] worse off than at present. I am afraid I have already been guilty of impressing these facts on both the parties, for the prospects of both seems very serious and it would be somewhat of a tragedy if they fell into the error of giving lip-service to a scheme like that now presented merely on the ground that it appears to present a liberal constitution for India.[31]

Later Fazli Husain told Lord Irwin that 'all his Muslims are generally disturbed at the least suggestion of the abandonment of communal electorate'.[32]

Hailey went all out to help those Muslim leaders who were opposed to the Nehru Report to have their views reported in the press. He wrote to *The Pioneer* and others: 'if the local Muslims do suggest to you that their views are radically different from those of the Nehru Conference, it would be a kindness, if you could help them in any way'.[33] Hailey was in close contact with some of the Muslim League leaders too. Some of them wanted to discuss the problem by convening a Muslim League meeting; Sir Abdur Rahim took the initiative and arranged the meeting in Calcutta. Sir Feroz Khan Noon kept Hailey informed of the venue and dates of the meeting; he sent the names of those who had attended the meeting to Malcolm Hailey, in confidence. Those who attended the meeting included Sir Muhammad Shafi, Sir Abul Qadir, Abdul Ghani, Malik Barakat Ali, Habibulla, Mehtab Shah Gilani, Mahaboob Alam Parvesh Akbar (editor of the *Muslim Outlook*).[34] In another revealing letter to Brown, Hailey repeated the point that 'a mixed electorate would only give them Hinduised Muslims who do not really represent their point of view and any proposal for a change of joint election is anathema to them'.[35]

Hailey maintained a close watch on the proceedings of the All Parties Conference. Hailey appealed to Fazli Husain as a powerful landowner, to enlist his support against the Nehru Report. To others he pointed out that the 'Hinduised Muslims' were untrustworthy and should not be friended. He was a tenacious campaigner, relentless in his arguments, and warned them of the consequences of nationalist politics which would eventually dethrone the Muslim aristocracy from power and influence. The end result of this process would be to place Muslims under the hegemony of the Congress for ever. Thus, prominent representatives of the British government in India succeeded to a great extent in moulding Muslim opinion in favour of the communal electorate.

Jinnah's attempt to lay the blame on the All Parties Conference led by 'Motilal Nehru and his lot', as Jinnah termed them, for 'receding' from and for having 'virtually rejected' the Delhi Muslim Proposals does not hold ground. In fact, Jinnah seems to have been looking for an excuse to 'wriggle out' of the situation, as his own position as the leader of the Muslim League was at stake. Hailey recorded: 'Jinnah's attempt at Christmas to strike up a bargain with the Hindus on the subject has lost him many friends. In a recent meeting of Muslims at Simla, as well as the United Provinces League at Meerut [*sic*] rejected any bargain of this nature.'[36] It could also be argued that the British government and a number of Muslim leaders conspired to defeat the attempt to make a new beginning with the constitution – making and forging bonds of nationalism. It is also relevant to address the fact that Jinnah did not boycott the Simon Commission because of a secret deal struck between the government and himself. Lord Irwin wrote saying that 'Jinnah having said something of this sort [*sic*]

were done and the claim to equality of status first recognized, he would give up his opposition to Parliamentary Commission and come in'.[37]

It is not clear from the records what 'something of this sort' meant since it was kept confidential by Irwin. Yet he did feel that 'Jinnah's party' and those who were closely associated with him wanted 'to get out of an uncomfortable position and that therefore we should be wrong to appear over-anxious or ready to help them at this stage'.[38] This confidential message delivered to Sir John Simon, the chairman of the commission, does not reveal much, yet it does indicate why Jinnah backed out of the Simon Commission boycott. It also demonstrates that Jinnah kept open his private channel of communication with the highest level of the government at a time when the All Parties Conference was engaged in the discussion of the Nehru Report. If one reads in between the lines of the happenings around this period, it would appear that Jinnah's rejection of the Nehru Report was not because of any principled stand but was the result of intense political manoeuvring. All things considered, Jinnah's charge against the All Parties Conference of 'bad faith' seems politically motivated. It is also interesting to note that Lord Irwin informed Lord Birkenhead, who had prophesied eternal discord among Indians, confidently: 'From now onwards, I think we may expect hostile criticisms of the All Parties Conference proceedings more and more frequent and important';[39] 'a debate in the House would be likely seriously to impair, if not altogether wreck, what is being described by certain newspapers as the second Lucknow Pact'.[40]

Jinnah's unpopularity in the Muslim-majority provinces

The Muslim League was in a state of disarray until 1936 or so. It was riddled with factions. It was divided during 1930–32; one faction was led by Sir Muhammad Shafi and the other by Jinnah. The provincial political bodies were more powerful than the central organization. The League lacked a popular base because it was essentially a feudal organization, the prime movers of which hailed mostly from the wealthy landed class. The Nawabs and the upper class Muslim title holders like the Khan Bahadurs constituted the bulk of Muslim League leadership. The professional classes like the lawyers, most of whom were barristers having had the benefit of a British education in England, also had land to reinforce their power and influence. The artisans and working classes forming the bulk of Muslim masses remained untouched by the nature of politics controlled by high-status groups. The League met once or twice in year, passing resolutions, demanding protection of their religious and cultural rights, which the British government guaranteed by adhering to the principle of reservation of seats for Muslims through the separate, communal and class representation. All Muslim leaders of status and education were invariably appointed from

time to time to the Governor's Council in the provinces or to the Viceroy's Executive Council at the centre, under whose guidance, the government functioned keeping their sectarian interests in view. As for the lower executive posts, 60 per cent were occupied by Muslims under the British Raj although they constituted only 14 per cent of the population.[41]

In 1930–31 the Muslim League, under pressure from the government, remained aloof from the Civil Disobedience Movement launched by the Congress; this was unlike the 1920–22 non-cooperation when the Khilafat cause motivated its members to join in large numbers. During periods of stress and crisis, the Muslim leaders were asked to 'keep their Muslims straight'[42] as if they were their subjects. Yet, the Civil Disobedience Movement under the Congress and Gandhi was able to draw on the support of a large segment of educated Muslims, tenants, workers and artisans.[43] A kind of class situation developed, the landed classes opposing the Congress and the civil disobedience and the tenantry and the peasant classes supporting them in the countryside. Thousands of educated Hindu youths deprived of government service and other avenues of respectable living joined the Congress movement. In such a situation, it was natural for the Muslim League leadership to support the British; in return they enjoyed British patronage both during peace time and in times of crisis. The 'Oudh Barons', as the *taluqdars* of UP were called by Harcourt Butler and Malcolm Hailey, were the main pillars of the British Raj in UP. The Nawab of Chattari, Sir Mohammad Yusuf, Raja Muhammad Ali Muhammad, the raja of Mahmudabad and Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan had pledged loyalty to the British. Malcolm Hailey emphasized: 'the general declaration that full consideration will be given to the minorities . . . I attach the very greatest importance at the moment.'[44] Even in 1930, Jinnah did not forget to help the British. He 'inspired' Sen to write an article entitled 'The Revolt against Congress Tyranny' in *The Pioneer*.[45]

In the Punjab, Sir Fazli Husain (1877–1936) and Sir Sikander Hyat Khan (1892–1942) were leaders of the Unionist Party; Sir Muhammad Shafi (1869–1932) and Dr Sir Muhammad Iqbal (1876–1938) supported the Muslim League from the Punjab, but were not great admirers of Jinnah. Similarly, Sir Abdoolah Haroon (1872–1942) and Sir Ghulam Husain Hidayatullah (1879–1948) in Sind; Sir Abdul Qaiyum (1866–1937) and his successors in the NWFP were leaders of the Muslim League.

Jinnah was not friendly with these regional satraps except Raja of Mahmudabad who was his client and had been a witness to Jinnah's *nikahnama* with Ruttie when they got married and later enjoyed Raja Saheb's hospitality at Nainital. The regional satraps wielded great influence and power and the provincial Muslim bodies were quite as powerful as the Unionist Party in the Punjab, the Krishak Proja Party of Fazlul Haq (1873–1962) in Bengal, the party of Sir Muhammad Sadullah (1866–1950) in Assam – and none of them were well disposed towards Jinnah. Under

the circumstances the Muslim League's finances and membership suffered and reached pathetic limits. In 1927, it was stated that the total membership of the Muslim League was 1,330. The annual expenditure of the League between 1931 and 1933 did not exceed 3,000 rupees. The annual subscription fee was reduced from 6 rupees to 1 rupee to attract members.[46] The famous presidential address of Sir Muhammad Iqbal delivered in 1930 at Allahabad, wherein he suggested the formation of a Muslim state in the North-West comprising Punjab, Sind, NWFP, Baluchistan and so on just managed to get a quorum of 75 members. The quorum was reduced from 75 to 50 members for the annual meeting of the Muslim League.[47] Jinnah's Fourteen Points, called the Magna Carta of Muslim rights, had no takers although it was adopted by the Muslim League. Jinnah was tired of these 'flunkeys and toadies' as he called those who led the League in 1930–32, and left for England to settle down in political exile. Later, he recalled in 1938, while addressing the Aligarh Muslim University Students Union: 'I felt so disappointed that I decided to settle in England. Not that I did not love India, but I felt utterly helpless . . . At the end of four years I found that the Musalmans were in the greatest danger. I made up my mind to come back to India, I could not do any good from London.'[48] The fact was that his practice in the Privy Council had not picked up. Furthermore, he used the offensive epithets for the Muslim League leaders when most of them were dead, like Sir Muhammad Shafi and Fazli Husain, or had disappeared from the political scene. In any case, Jinnah was known for his intemperate language which he used freely against his opponents and dissidents.

How did Jinnah organize the League in 1937–38? In 1938, it was reported that the membership of the Muslim League increased by thousands. Three important events helped Jinnah to engage in a blistering attack on the Congress and Hindus in general. When the Congress began its Muslim mass contact programme, the Muslim League was literally rattled and sensed grave danger to its popularity if not its very existence. Second, the controversy relating to the ministry formation in UP in 1937 (see the latter part of this chapter) gave Jinnah an opportunity to use the issue as an example of bad faith on the part of the 'Hindu' Congress, and to arouse communal passions by asking Muslims to organize themselves if they wished to survive in India. Third, the alleged atrocities committed by the Congress-led governments in provinces all over the country during 1937–39 and in UP in particular gave Jinnah the chance for malicious propaganda. The Pirpur Report and Shareef Report, which were later ascertained to be false and exaggerated by independent opinion makers, were used to prove to his Muslim brethren that nothing short of a separate homeland for Muslims could save their religion, culture and honour from the 'Hindu' governments. A mass hysteria was whipped up by the Muslim League under the presidentship of Jinnah against the 'Hindu' Indian

National Congress, declaring that Islam was in danger and that Pakistan was the answer to their sufferings. That is how the Lahore resolution of 1940 was passed by the Muslim League demanding a separate Muslim state of Pakistan.

In 1936–37, however, Jinnah's leadership could hardly muster sufficient strength to win the elections. In Sind, with a Muslim population of 74 per cent , not a single Muslim League candidate was elected in the 1937 election. Khan Bahadur Allah Baksh was an independent Muslim premier, who ran the government until 1942 with the support of the Congress and independent Hindu legislators. He was forced to resign through Jinnah's manoeuvres; in a fit of rage Jinnah had asked people whether he could not be got rid off. Allah Baksh was shot dead in May 1943 by an unknown, unidentified assailant. Nehru observed 'this was the culmination of the Muslim League's persecution of Allah Bux'.[49] Allah Baksh had consistently opposed Jinnah's call for Pakistan.

In the Punjab, Muslims constituted 57 per cent of the total population. Yet the Muslim League won only one seat out of the 84 reserved Muslim seats. Sir Fazli Husain, the founder of the Unionist Party, organized a workable coalition government in the Punjab comprising Sikh and Hindu representatives. Sir Chhotu Ram was a pillar of strength for the Unionist Party until his death in 1945, which was a great blow to the coalition politics of the Punjab. Fazli Husain opposed the Pakistan principle and called Jinnah's Muslim League a communal party.[50] He declared: 'I do not want the Punjab to be the Ulster of India.'[51] He realized the value of the support of Hindus and Sikhs without which it was impossible to run the government in the Punjab. Neither the Hindus nor the Sikhs nor Muslims by themselves could administer the Punjab. Cooperation, mutual trust and a policy of give and take could ensure good governance. Besides, Hindus and Sikhs were economically more powerful than the Muslims. The Sikhs constituted only 13 per cent of the population but formed 44 per cent of the electorate on the basis of land ownership and property qualification of franchise. The Muslims constituted only 44 per cent of the electorate even though their population was more than 56 per cent.

Fazli Husain died suddenly in July 1936. He had been an outstanding Muslim leader according to a British estimate. He was the founder of the National Unionist Party in the Punjab, which ran the government with a measure of success. Lord Irwin, the Viceroy, sent an extract from Lord Lytton's letter to Malcolm Hailey praising Fazli Husain's qualities:

> Sir Fazli Husain was by common agreement the best Mohammedan representative that India has ever sent to Geneva. He mastered the subject well, was very clear in his arguments and intervened several times – always with effect – in the committee discussions. In a rather critical discussion on the last day his speech chalked

> a satisfactory compromise to be reached and saved the situation. I was very favourably impressed with him and think he is one of the best representatives of his community in India.[52]

But Jinnah had a poor relationship with Fazli Husain, probably because of Husain's supremacy in Punjab politics and because Jinnah suffered from inhibitions owing to his own inferiority in politics around that time. Fazli Husain also had a poor opinion of Jinnah's organizing abilities. He wrote about Jinnah: 'He has done seemingly nothing except talk and talk and talk. He apparently believes that he was so clever that he will get people to agree to become his nominees and serve on the Central Board and then they will be responsible for running the election in the province. So the scheme is purely a paper one.'[53]

Jinnah had been advocating the opening of Muslim League branches in the districts and had constituted a Central Parliamentary Board against the wishes and advice of the Punjabi politicians. Fazli Husain wrote to Sir Sikander: 'As to Jinnah I agree with all that you said in your Ist letter to me. Jinnah's move in establishing a Central Parliamentary Board of the League was a wrong one, detrimental to Indian Muslim interests. We have taken the right line. He has misrepresented us and the press propaganda in his support is responsible for his utter failure in not having been broadcast. We refused to join with him.'[54] Fazli Husain was an excellent negotiator and communicator. He had earlier organized a system of representation in the provincial legislature and services on the basis of mutual agreement between the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, which had worked admirably in the Punjab. He, therefore, was not very enthusiastic about Jinnah's 'communal' politics, as he called it. The population of the Punjab was composed of 56.6 per cent Muslims, 28 per cent Hindus and 13 per cent Sikhs. Their representation, based on electorate eligibility, was 51 per cent Muslims, 28 per cent Hindus and 18 per cent Sikhs in the legislature; it was similar in the services, with the Sikhs having 19 per cent reservation.[55] Reverting back to Jinnah's attempt to revitalize the Muslim League beginning with the districts, he wondered why Jinnah had not done what any 'ordinary practical man would have done... Revive the Provincial League and give it a good start...'[56]

Jinnah's attempt to reach directly the grass-roots politicians without taking into confidence the weak and spineless provincial leadership of the Muslim League worried Fazli Husain, since that would mean going over his head to appeal to the Muslim community in the rural areas. He pointed out that 'miscellaneous urbanites like Iqbal, Shuja, Tajuddin, Barakat Ali have naturally been trying to make something out of this'.[57] These urbanites were League sympathizers and Fazli Husain wondered why Jinnah worked through them, who had hardly any rural base or following in the villages.

Jinnah was aware that he must create a mass base in the Punjab, for the Muslim League and for his own political design and leadership. In Muslim politics it appeared no one was fully reliable. Everybody suspected the other. Even Fazli Husain suspected the loyalty of Sir Sikander Hyat Khan. In a series of exchanges Sir Sikander tried hard to impress Fazli Husain about his 'loyalty' and 'support' to him and that 'the insinuations and conjectures are without any foundation'.[58] Fazli Husain, the founder of the party and the premier of Punjab, kept saying: 'The usual attraction of power, prestige, authority do not appeal to me',[59] yet he kept the strings of authority in his own hands. Jinnah also had his own problems with the greedy and needy politicians of the Punjab. Abdul Barakat Ali of Lahore, while writing to Jinnah, 'I am keeping your flag flying. I am spending Rs. 250 per month from my pocket', asked for money or donations from 'Raja Sahib' or he could not 'sustain this drain'.[60] He informed Jinnah further that 'Maulana Abul Kalam Azad has been put in charge in reclaiming this province and for this purpose he has deputed Mohammad Alam and Maulvi Abdul Qadir'. He also said that 'Rs 50,000 have been donated for starting a Congress paper in English and vernacular, but they will not succeed'.[61] Later, in the general elections in 1937 only two Muslim League candidates were elected from the Punjab. One was Barakat Ali and the other was Raja Ghaznafar Ali Khan, who deserted the Muslim League and joined the Unionist ministry, under Sir Sikander Hyat Khan. Jinnah tried to organize a united front against the Unionist Party, comprising the Ahrars, Ittehad-i-Millat, the Khaksars and Independents, but did not succeed. The Unionists won the election. Sir Sikander formed the government in the Punjab. Whatever the views of Fazli Husain, Jinnah had a resolution approved by the Muslim League at its sitting on 13 April 1936 in Bombay, authorizing him to constitute a Central Election Board consisting of no fewer than 55 members representing the Muslims of the whole country.[62]

Jinnah's behaviour pattern against dissidents

Fazli Husain's successor, Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, proved equally powerful and a man of vision and foresight. He was regarded by the British as a statesman. He advocated coalition government as a substitute for Pakistan. Jinnah repudiated Sir Sikander's plan but the latter refused to favour the Pakistan idea. In 1939 Sir Sikander had issued a pamphlet, 'Outlines of a Scheme of Indian Federation', according to which India was divided into seven zones; each zone having a regional legislature consisting of elected representatives from British India and Indian states; a federal legislature of 375 members with one-third being Muslim members. Certain safeguards were envisaged for the protection of the rights of minorities, whether Hindus or Muslims. He favoured a dominion status to begin with and wanted coalition government in each zone.[63]

Sir Sikander met Gandhi privately and they discussed his zonal scheme on 1 July 1939. Gandhi's response was fairly favourable as can be seen in his letter of 17 July 1939 to Sir Sikander: 'Dominion Status is a bitter pill for Congressmen to swallow' and 'although the scheme is too complicated to form an opinion . . . yours is the only solution [of the communal tangle] of a constructive character on behalf of the League. I am glad that you have decided to publish it in full. I must thank you for taking me into confidence and asking me to give my opinion on it.'[64]

Jinnah repudiated Sikander's plan having been put forward without any authorization from the Muslim League. Sikander accepted Jinnah's 'dictatorship only when no great public issue was at stake'.[65] Owing to the opposition from Jinnah he did not join the National Defence Council constituted by the British government but he continued to support the government in its war effort wholeheartedly. Later in 1942, he resigned from the Muslim League working committee.

In 1940, when the Lahore resolution was passed, 'Sir Sikander was genuinely embarrassed by the Resolution. His own dislike of Pakistan, or Jinnihistan as he irreverently called it, was well known. He had publicly stated that Pakistan meant a Muslim Raj; and Hindu Raj elsewhere and that he would have nothing to do with it.'[66]

Not only did Jinnah repudiate Sikander's plan, he took exception to his meeting with Gandhi and said that he could not speak on behalf of the Muslim League. Sir Sikander was a statesman and was extremely concerned and strove to find an equitable and just solution of the communal problem. He was even prepared to meet V.D. Savarkar, the Hindu Mahasabha leader, and proposed conferring with Congress leaders. He sought Jinnah's permission for it but Jinnah was wild with rage and immediately sent a telegram asking him to desist. Jinnah's telegram and Sir Sikander's reply must be read to get a proper perspective of their relationship and how personal animosities finally destroyed the good intentions behind the moves. Jinnah's telegram reads as follows: 'Your telegram. I cannot agree your seeing Savarkar as go-between. If he desires [*sic*] see me he is welcome. Regarding Punjab situation you may use your discretion and see Congress leaders as Premier Punjab Government at your office or residence. Please adhere strictly letter, spirit Working Committee Resolution. Hindu leaders welcome to see me regarding Hindu Muslim Question.'[67]

Sikander Hyat Khan was equally wild with rage at Jinnah's language and the implied humiliating treatment meted out to a senior, important leader of eminence, wealth and power. Sikander shot out his epistle saying that he could not believe

> this message could have been from you . . . Your telegram to put it mildly shows an utter lack of decency and sense of proportion. I never had any intention of acting as an intermediary between

> Mr. Savarkar and yourself. You have reserved to yourself the privilege of acting as 'go between' between the Hindus and the working committee, and this is as it should be, as after all it is primarily the function of the office bearers of the League to play this delicate role . . .
>
> As regards interviews, so long as the resolution of the working committee is not contravened, it is none of the business of the working committee or the President to dictate to me in those matters. It is for me and for that matter the inherent right of every individual member of the League to decide whom to see and where and when. As I have already said I mentioned in my telegram the possibility of my seeing the Congress leaders to avoid any misunderstanding. Your gratuitous advice regarding the venue of the meeting and the capacity in which I should see them was uncalled for and irrelevant and as I have said indicates a lack of sense of proportion . . .
>
> One brief reference to the penultimate sentence of your telegraphic message. You say Hindu leaders welcome to see me regarding Hindu, Muslim question. I only wish they could be made to reciprocate that desire. It appears they are shy of going near you because they are not sure the kind of welcome they would receive if they went to see you.[68]

Jinnah must have been dumbfounded by the intensity and vehemence implied in the tone and content of the letter, but he realized it was time for him to come down from his pontifical heights and said that 'your position and acquisition [*sic* – probably accusation] are entirely unwarranted and without justification'.[69] Would Sikander have again made an effort to meet other leaders to seek a settlement of the burning issue facing the two communities? That is how Jinnah humiliated people. He had a closed mind for new ideas. He was bound to be a lonely man without ever hoping to get full cooperation and support from people of stature among the Muslims. Sikander was ruthless in his blistering epistle and went on to say that even a *Quaid-i-Azam* (great leader) was 'a human being' and he should do some 'heart-searching to see whether there is not room for self-correction or self-improvement'.[70]

It is interesting to note what H.V. Hodson had to say about the Punjab communal problem. Although Sir Sikander appeared a nationalist, it was because of political expediency and necessity that he tried to rise above the communal stance. Hodson, in his note of 6 January 1939, provides great insights into the communal problem 'which itself is to be considered in terms of a struggle for power under a future autonomous regime'.[71] Sir Sikander's government was fairly successful and 'his ministry is not outwardly communal, containing as it does several Hindus and Muslims.

It is nevertheless a main bulwark of the Muslim defence in India as a whole…Apart from the ordinary Hindu–Muslim conflict, the Punjab has a special interest in preventing the domination of the Congress in All India politics. The great majority of the recruits in the army are drawn from the Punjab, most of them being Musalmans…ten crores in pay and pension is the share in the Punjab, this position will go if the Congress dominates.'[72] Sir Sikander was therefore not likely to sell Muslim interests at the altar of Congress cooperation and goodwill, and Jinnah should have had no fears on this account.

Jinnah's purpose in objecting to such overtures seems to have rested on personal reasons; in so far as it affected his position as the unquestioned leader of the Muslim League. Perhaps also he considered only himself to be qualified to enter into negotiations. In March 1939, he had raised similar objections to Sir Aga Khan, Sir Khwaja Nazimuddin, Home Minister of Bengal, and Sir Sikander negotiationing with Gandhi on the Hindu–Muslim question 'behind Jinnah's back'. Nawabzada Khurshid Ali Khan, secretary of the Unionist Party of Punjab and a member of the Council of State, issued a denial in the press on 3 March 1939 that there was no truth in the rumours of a 'Hindu–Muslim pact' being signed 'behind Jinnah's back'.[73] Jinnah wanted his say in all matters, first and foremost, and treated with contempt any attempt made by fellow Muslim Leaguers at a solution to the problem. He, above all, must be the negotiator, the arbiter and the sole spokesman of the Muslim League. Very little discussion ever took place in the working committee of the Muslim League and its members attended the meetings 'but the only work it [working committee] did was to agree'.[74]

Jinnah's haughty and brusque behaviour must have astounded his colleagues, but very few stood up to him. Sir Fazli Husain, Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, Khizr Hyat Khan Tiwana, Fazlul Haq of Bengal and Allah Baksh of Sind were the exceptions, who stood up against his plan for Pakistan and his leadership. The sad plight of Dr S.A. Latif, a prominent intellectual from Hyderabad Deccan, must also be told. He was the author of a proposal for the creation of homogeneous cultural zones in India which involved a transfer of population.[75] His articles were published in newspapers and he sent his proposal to the Muslim League for consideration in 1941. Jinnah wrote to him:

> I have repeatedly made it clear to you and publicly that the Muslim League has appointed no such committee as you keep harping upon; and neither the Muslim League nor I can recognize any of these suggestions or proposals of the so-called zones… Please therefore let me make it clear once for all that neither Sir Abdoolah Haroon nor you should go on talking of this committee or that committee and imploring the Muslim League of authority

> behind the proposals that may be formulated by individuals or groups.[76]

Another facet of Jinnah's leadership traits may be noted: his disdain for others or for any new idea which conflicted with his own. Liaquat Ali Khan, the only trusted lieutenant of Jinnah over the years and permanent general secretary of the Muslim League of which Jinnah had become the permanent President in 1936, wanted Jinnah to meet Mian Iftekharuddin of Punjab, Dr Ali Zaheer and Sajjad Zaheer:

> . . . all young Congressmen have had talks with me. They are most anxious that there should be some settlement between the League and the Congress as they feel that the country could not progress any further without such a settlement. They give me to understand that the left wing of the Congress is most anxious for a settlement. They also said that the Congress may accept the Muslim League organization as the sole spokesman and leader of Moslem India, but there ought to be some face-saving formula.

Jinnah chided Liaquat Ali Khan and said they were all Congress agents and no purpose would be served by holding discussion with them.[77]

Liaquat Ali Khan tried to intercede on behalf of Nawab Ismail Khan with whom 'I had a long talk . . . yesterday'. He felt greatly hurt and thought that Jinnah had no confidence in him and the right course for him was to place his resignation 'in your hands'.[78] There are many more such instances. Sir Aboolah Haroon and Sir Khwaja Nazimuddin also sought to allay Jinnah's fears regarding their loyalty to him. After all, Jinnah felt he was the supreme leader, *Quaid-i-Azam,* and hence all must pay court to him. At the Lucknow session of the All India Muslim League in 1937, Jinnah expelled from the Muslim League its former President of 1936, Sir Wazir Hasan, and Maulana Madani of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind, on the ground that they were members of the Congress as well as the Muslim League.[79] Incidentally, Jinnah had been a member of both the Congress and the Muslim League until 1920. Begam Shah Nawaz Khan and Sir Sultan Ahmed were expelled from the Muslim League for six years because they refused to resign from the National Defence Council of the Viceroy in 1941. Jinnah made an example of these 'aristocratic job-hunters'.[80]

Dr Latif's scheme, however, provoked considerable criticism in the press in the north. Perhaps it fell short of the expectations of Muslims in northern India. It was stated: 'There is not a Muslim paper which has not supported the idea of giving Musalmans a separate homeland. And similarly there is no Hindu paper which has not first discarded and then characterized it as a dangerous scheme from the Hindu point of view.'[81]

Sikander Hyat Khan also felt somewhat dispirited by the way the Muslim League functioned and wrote to Jinnah asking his permission not to attend the meeting of the working committee on 26 December 1941. At the same time he referred to the grave situation 'which might make or mar the future destiny of the Muslims alone [*sic*] but of India as a whole' and advocated support for the British war effort. He also advised Jinnah to examine issues from an all-India perspective rather than from a purely sectarian angle.[82] On 6 March 1942, Sir Sikander asked Jinnah to relieve him of his duties as a member of the working committee of the Muslim League on the grounds that, first, he was too preoccupied with Punjab affairs and, second, there was a divergence of opinion on many issues between him and the working committee. As long as Sir Sikander lived, it was hoped that Pakistan would remain a distant possibility. Unfortunately, he died in his sleep in December 1942.

His successor, Khizr Hyat Khan Tiwana, was a tougher man than Sir Sikander and Jinnah was unable to make any headway in Punjab politics as long as he remained the premier. He opposed the League tooth and nail, but the times had changed. In the election held in 1946, Jinnah's Muslim League emerged as the largest single party, but Khizr's party, with the support of Sikhs and Hindus, mustered enough strength for him to continue as premier. In January 1947, he banned the Muslim League National Guards which made the Muslim League more belligerent, making his life miserable. Sir Zafrullah Khan and Mirza Mohammad Ahmad asked him to join the League; the message being that he should resign, which he did on 2 March 1947. Mirza Mohammad Ahmad, the head of the Ahmadiyya movement, wrote to Jinnah: 'Now you have a great lever to get Muslim rights from your opponents. Now only NWF remains.'[83]

The strangest situation to note was that in the provinces where Muslims were in a majority the Muslim League was unable to form ministries. The Congress ministry under Dr Khan Saheb ruled over the North-West Frontier Province. He remained premier until independence. It was only after a referendum on the religious issue of Pakistan that his position became precarious. Until September 1942, Allah Baksh was premier of Sind and ran the government with the support of the Congress. In the Punjab, as has been seen, the National Unionist Party was in power. In Bengal, Fazlul Haq continued to be premier until 1943, opposing forcefully the idea of Pakistan. Much later he joined the Muslim League when he saw that the slogan 'Islam in danger' had influenced the Muslim community greatly. Yet the Muslim League emerged as the single largest party only in 1946. In that year in Sind the Muslim League could not get a majority, in spite of more than 74 per cent Muslim population. In Assam Sir Muhammad Saadullah became premier with the Congress support. Thus, despite Muslim majorities where 'the Muslim League had carried on propaganda

to arouse religious fanaticism and communal passions'[84] it was not able to sweep the polls in 1946.

Hence, the claim of Jinnah that the Muslim League was the sole spokesman of the Muslims and represented 'Muslim India' sounded hollow. In the Muslim-minority areas Muslims by and large voted for the Congress. Only in UP was the leadership of the Muslim League, consisting as it did of the landed aristocracy, able to influence Muslims to an extent. A large block of Muslims existed under the Nationalist Muslim Party and other Muslim bodies, like the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind, All India Momin Conference and the Majalis-i-Ahar, who were opposed to the Pakistan idea. These bodies formed the Azad Muslim Conference and held a conference in Delhi on 27–28 April 1940, presided over by Allah Baksh. It was reported that the daily attendance at the conference exceeded 50,000 Muslims. All shades of Muslim opinion except that of the Muslim League were represented. The conference rejected the Pakistan resolution and called for a constituent assembly to draw up a constitution.[85]

In the south at Kumbakonam, Madras, a conference attracting a huge gathering was held on 8 July 1941, denouncing the claim of the Muslim League to speak for all the Muslims of India. In March 1942, a few days before the Cripps proposals were announced, the Azad Muslim Conference met again in Delhi and asked Jinnah to abandon communal politics and join the national forces of India. It declared that 'Jinnah's claim to represent Muslims of India was a subterfuge'.[86] The Nationalist Muslim Party continued to fight against communalism throughout with great distinction. In 1946–47 several clashes occurred between the nationalist Muslims and members of the Muslim League especially in towns and cities in Uttar Pradesh, and many casualties were reported.[87]

Several prominent Muslim personalities opposed Jinnah's uncompromising stand on the Hindu–Muslim question. Even Dr Muhammad Iqbal, who had been the pioneer in initiating the idea of a separate Muslim state, especially in north-west India, in 1930 had changed his opinion after years of close observation and consideration of the communal problem. He was reported to have said to many an individual, for instance to Edward Thompson, that it 'would be disastrous to the British Government, disastrous to the people of India, disastrous to the Hindus and disastrous to my own community'.[88] Jawaharlal Nehru also wrote about his meeting with Iqbal a few months before Iqbal's death in 1938 when Dr Iqbal spoke against the Pakistan idea and said that he had not meant to tear away the North-West from the Indian subcontinent.[89]

Sir Mirza Ismail, the former premier of Mysore and the premier of Jaipur state in 1943, asserted: 'A communal movement is inimical to the interests of the country.'[90] He also said that 'differences [between the two communities] are negligible besides the bonds that unite them'.[91] Sir Akbar Hyderi (1869–1942), a man of great administrative experience and

vision, Prime Minister of the Nizam of Hyderabad in 1941, expressed himself to be totally opposed to the idea of Pakistan.[92]

Shia–Sunni controversy

Several important issues cropped up during Jinnah's presidentship of the Muslim League, for which Jinnah could not provide any solution. It is important to remember that the Shia–Sunni controversy had been a live issue for generations and hence to find a solution of such a vexed problem was not easy, but Jinnah refused to be drawn into the controversy. Shia–Sunni clashes occurred in Lucknow in March–April 1939 on the question of 'rights of public recital of *Madhe-Sabha*' by the Sunnis. It was felt that, in the interest of amity between 'the two sister communities', an agreement should be reached to avoid the public recital of *Madhe-Sabha* by the Sunnis and *Tabarrah* by the Shias. Whatever rights the parties may have acquired in this connection, it was important 'not to hurt the religious feelings' of each other and avoid the 'deplorable happenings'[93] of Lucknow, where precious life and property had been lost leaving behind a trail of bad blood and bitterness among them.

The law-and-order situation and the tension resulting from it had become quite explosive but the Muslim League remained totally unconcerned about it. Suggestions were made for a conference of influential members of the Shias and Sunnis to evolve an acceptable agreement. Prominent names suggested were the raja of Mahmudabad, Raja Saheb of Pirpur, Raja Saheb of Salimpur, Maulana Hasarat Mohani, Maulana Zaffar Ali Kahn and Nawab Mohammad Ismael, 'who could expose the absurdity of *Tabarrah* and *Madhe-Sabha* agitation' to the public.[94] But Jinnah did not move. One Miss Rizvi wrote in despair to Jinnah: 'Oh Dictator of the Nine Crores (ninety millions) of Muslims of India! Why have you adopted a policy of non-intervention? Will you like to see the Muslim League being reduced to an organ of one community alone? . . . Pray drop a line to satisfy my restless soul for which I enclose an envelope for convenience's sake alone.'[95] No reply ever went to Miss Rizvi 'to satisfy her restless soul'.

The *Hindustan Times* published an interview on 14 June 1939 with Khaliquzzaman, leader of the UP Muslim League, who was asked what the League was doing to find a way out of the impasse. He was reported to have replied that the 'League had kept itself aloof and did not take any initiative to settle the matter and would maintain the same attitude to the problem'.[96] The *Hindustan Times* commented: 'How can the Muslim League which claims to be the custodian of Muslim interest maintain an attitude of indifference to the detriment of those relations . . . To allow the situation to drift . . . does not redound to the credit of those who the other day insisted on the recognition of their League as the sole representative

of the Muslim community as a condition to their agreeing to a solution of the Hindu–Muslim problem.'[97]

No comments so far from Jinnah. Only the editorial in *The Pioneer*, the pro-British paper from Lucknow, of 15 June 1939, drew out Jinnah from his stupor. The paper commented: 'This Muslim League, which was supposed to be the custodian of the interest of every section [of] Indian Muslims has shown itself to be incapable of reconciling those differences . . . If the Muslim League cannot extinguish the present conflagration in Lucknow, with what right can they claim to speak to Iranians, Turks and Egyptians as representatives of Muslim India . . . what right have they to talk of the Palestine issue in London for instance . . .?'[98] Jinnah, however, did not go public in the expression of his views but at long last wrote to Sir Reja Ali: 'It was left to the leaders of the Provincial League who are members of the Working Committee to make further efforts in Lucknow for an honourable settlement and that was the view taken by everyone, and therefore no resolution was passed.'[99] The leaders of the UP Muslim League had publicly expressed themselves to be helpless and had decided to remain aloof and S.M. Ismail appealed to Jinnah to react as a Shia Muslim, otherwise we 'Shias in the Muslim League will find ourselves suffering under serious disabilities and limitations'.[100]

It could be argued that Jinnah cleverly remained out of the controversy since it was not only destructive to the claim of the Muslim League being representative of all Muslims, but politically its repercussions were likely to spill over and affect Jinnah's personal hold over the Muslims. Jinnah was a Shia Muslim himself. In the explosive situation which had developed in UP it was difficult to arrive at an equitable solution between the two warring sects of Muslims. The Sunnis were in a majority. According to the 1931 census there were 5.5 million Shias in UP out of about 7.5 million in the whole country. The Shias were generally known as unorthodox Muslims; they believed in the ten *avatars* (about which Jinnah himself was aware, as his conversation with Horniman shows)[101] and were much less communal-minded, though religious all the same. The Shia Conference disassociated from the Congress as late as 1939–40. In April 1942, the Shias declared that they stood for the independence and political advancement of the country. It was therefore a very delicate task for Jinnah to take a decision which would please everybody. A large number of Shias were also with the Muslim League, as seen above, and therefore Jinnah decided to pass the buck to the provincial Muslim League in UP.

Although Jinnah claimed to be first and last a Muslim and nothing else, he was conscious that he was a Shia Muslim. His aversion to the Aga Khan and his politics, as observed in respect of his association with Fazli Husain, was both personal and ideological. He never looked to the Aga Khan for

guidance or help. He treated him with a certain degree of derision, to prove himself to be above the Shia–Sunni controversy which tended to destabilise his leadership.

Jinnah was determined to keep his position of power and authority over the Muslim League, which he had acquired after a great deal of trouble and manoeuvring. To prove himself a great Muslim leader he had rejected his Hindu past; to maintain that position he was equally determined to forget his unorthodox Shia past. He had to prove that he was more staunch in his Islamic beliefs than the Sunni *mullahs* and *maulvis*, whom he hated. He did not give up drink, nor did he visit the mosque regularly even after 1940 when he declared that the destiny of Muslims was in having Pakistan as a separate homeland. To prove himself worthy, he carried out blistering attacks on Hindus and tirades against the Congress as a Hindu organization and its leader, Gandhi, as nothing but a Hindu leader.

In 1946, when the Cabinet mission ended without any achievement to its credit, he accused Cripps of trying to 'wriggle out' of the situation. When Pethick-Lawrence stated that Jinnah 'could not have a monopoly of Muslim nominations', he shouted: 'I am not a trader, I am not asking for concessions for oil, nor am I higgling and haggling like a *banya*.' Stanley Wolpert commented: 'His [Jinnah's] fierce rejection of the business of his forefathers . . . underscores how betrayed he felt . . .'[102] What concerns us here is the mental outlook of Jinnah and his rejection of his Hindu past, his Shia past, his liberal past and, finally, his rejection of his forefathers' occupation itself. Jinnah came from a trading community. While he was attacking the *banya* Gandhi, he had to prove that he himself was not *banya*, although he was one by his heritage.

Concessions for oil did not mean concessions from the oil satraps of the Middle East. Oil pressing and oil selling were considered lowly professions by both Hindus and Muslims in India since oil is smelly and messes up your fingers and spoils your clothes. While Islam stood for a universal brotherhood of believers, a distinction of class and social distance was maintained between the *ashrafs* (upper classes) and *ajlafs* (lower classes) among the Muslims. Jinnah was least concerned with the Islamic idealism of brotherhood and looked with disdain at the lower orders. Most significant of all, however, he wanted to banish from his memory everything regarding his past including his ancestral and parental heritage. By doing so he was a transformed man, a modern man but a man without roots. That was the crux of his personality. It was this incarnation of Jinnah which created huge problems. His inflexible, dogmatic and uncompromising stand on most issues during the Simla Conference or the Cabinet mission negotiations could not have brought about a settlement with any body.

The Congress atrocities: myth and reality, 1937–39

Many contemporary observers have observed, with varying degree of emphasis, that the non-inclusion of Muslim League ministers in the Govind Ballabh Pant ministry in 1937 was a turning point in the relations between the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League. Chagla felt that Jinnah himself did not favour Pakistan before this period and that the UP ministry formation left a great deal of bitterness among Muslims and changed the course of history.[103] Shiva Rao also thought that the 1937 episode was 'crucial' and somehow the word went round that it was Congress's 'breach of faith' which denied the Muslim League a share in the government.[104] Frank Moraes observed: 'Misreading the poor showing of the Muslim League at the polls, the Congress spurned the Muslim League overtures for a coalition', which turned the League into an inveterate foe of the Congress.[105] British official opinion similarly expressed itself against a Congress monopoly of power in the Congress-ruled provinces. Sir Harry Haig, a senior Indian civil servant, who often took an impartial view of situations, believed that a coalition between the Congress and the Muslim League would have resolved the communal question.[106] Penderel Moon, another distinguished member of the Indian Civil Service who served in the Punjab under Sikander Hyat Khan, thought that the ministry formation episode of 1937 was 'the prime cause of the creation of Pakistan'.[107] Most recent historians from the UK and the USA who have touched upon the problem of the partition of India hold the view that the 1937 episode was crucial enough to exacerbate Hindu–Muslim relations.

Such perceptive and penetrating assessments, coming as they do from various quarters, comprising responsible and able observers of the Indian political scene, command respect. But it must be pointed out that most of these writings and opinions have the advantage of hindsight. Several monographs have been written on the issue which suggest that no agreement, formal or informal, had ever been reached between the Congress and the Muslim League; not even a semblance of agreement was ever reached between the two political parties. In fact whatever personal talks were conducted between Chaudhry Khaliquzzaman and Govind Ballabh Pant were purely outside party lines and there was no assurance given by anyone to include a Muslim League leader in the ministry. Jawaharlal Nehru said that it was unthinkable for him to have a member of the Muslim League in the Congress ministry unless there was congruence of purpose between the two elements and a workable agreement regarding policies and programmes. Besides, he said that the Congress and the Muslim League had differed so radically from each other that there was hardly any possibility of an agreement to work together. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad writes that Jawaharlal Nehru had agreed to include Choudhry Khaliquzzaman, but the Muslim League wanted two ministerships,

instead of one.[108] The inevitable choice of a single Muslim League member to be co-opted into the ministry was bound to fall on Khaliquzzaman who had been a Congressite, and Jinnah never liked him for that reason. Hearing the rumour of talks between Pant and Khaliquzzaman, Jinnah was quick to castigate the latter, advising him at the same time not to enter into any discussion.[109] The fact is that Jinnah was not approached by the Congress leaders, nor did the Muslim League send any feelers to the Congress for a discussion on the subject.[110] Therefore, there should not have been so much of heart-burning among the Muslim League members. It is true that Jinnah blew up this matter to derive political mileage, but even he waited for three years to cite the episode as evidence of 'Hindu' chicanery and 'Hindu' lust for power. It was only in March 1940, at the Lahore session of the Muslim League wherein the 'Pakistan' resolution was passed, that he referred to this incident. He said: 'The Congress betrayed us... We never thought that the Congress High Command would have acted in the manner in which they actually did in the Congress-governed provinces... Providence came to our help and that gentleman's agreement was broken to pieces and the Congress, thank Heavens, went out of office.'[111]

It is important to bear in mind that Jinnah did not speak of the violation of the so-called 'gentleman's agreement' in 1937 immediately after the ministry formation. Had there been a violation of any agreement, surely Jinnah would have exploded with his usual ferocity denouncing the Hindu Congress then and there. He would not have waited for three long years for his lively denunciations. In attempting to build a plausible case for the Pakistan resolution he deliberately scratched the faded memory of his Muslim fraternity and reminded them with renewed vigour of instances of 'tyranny' and 'oppression', heaped on them by the Hindus through their Congress-led governments.

As for Maulana Azad's contention that the exclusion of another Muslim League member from the UP cabinet was harmful in the long run and that Jawaharlal Nehru ought to have agreed to the inclusion if only to avoid a showdown with the Muslim League, Jawaharlal Nehru was categorical in his statement that there was no question of inclusion of any Muslim League member in the cabinet unless and until the League had agreed to the programmes and policies of the Congress government in UP. He said that the two organizations were poles apart in their objectives and outlook and Muslim League ministers were bound to be obstacles in the launching of radical policies, especially with regard to tenancy reforms. In fact, a pro-tenant bill, guaranteeing security of tenure to the hereditary and occupancy tenants and other categories of tenants was introduced in the UP legistature in April 1938, in furtherance of the promise given to the peasant classes in the Congress election manifesto of 1937. A hue and cry was raised by the landed classes, the *taluqdars* and *zamindars* (most of whom were Muslim) against the measures. Harry Haig, the Governor of UP, felt

that these *taluqdars* had 'a pathetic faith in their sanads'.[112] The raja of Jahangirbad sent a memorial to the Governor seeking the intervention of the Secretary of State for India against the bill.[113] The Congress had rightly provided for ending the iniquitous ejection laws and wished to review the ownership rights of the landed classes over the 'sir lands', the lands directly owned and cultivated by them. Most of the Muslim *taluqdars* were supporters of the Muslim League. Similarly, many Hindu *taluqdars* supported the Hindu Mahasabha; the tenants and peasants overwhelmingly supporting the Congress. There was an identity of interest between the Muslim League *taluqdars* and the British government as opposed to the Congress and the peasant classes. A class situation was developing in the countryside and the UP Congress, under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, was on record declaring that the *zamindari* system would finally be abolished. Actually it was abolished in 1948. This was the main issue between the Congress and the Muslim League. There was fierce opposition to these measures from the landed gentry. That is why Jawaharlal Nehru called the Muslim League a reactionary body and there could hardly have been any reconciliation on issues of such radical nature between them. Most of the *taluqdars* were firm in their loyalty to the British, Haig observed, 'but are nervous' and 'the larger *taluqdars* are bewildered with the Congress assumption of power'.[114]

When Jinnah raised the issue of Muslim culture, religion being in danger, some projected the loss of property, power, influence and position in UP society as a whole. Jinnah ridiculed such ideas and said the Muslim masses as well as the Muslim youth 'were all hypnotized' by 'Congress falsehood'. Jinnah declared: 'They were led to believe that the Congress was fighting for the freedom for the motherland . . . They were led to believe that the question was really an economic one and that they were fighting for *dal bhat* [poor man's food], for the labour and the *kisans*. Their pure, untutored minds became easy victims of the Congress net.'[115]

One of the prominent Congress leaders of Delhi, Asaf Ali, maintained a good rapport with Jinnah and tried to dissuade him from the communal path and asked him in a letter to join mainstream politics in the Congress. He argued: 'The more the minorities insist in forming separate political, as contra-distinguished from religious, groups, the more difficult will they make the ultimate solution of the problem.'[116] In a vast country like India, where Muslims were scattered all over, Fazli Husain's experiment of constituting 'non-communal political groups on the basis of an economic programme had achieved tolerably good results in the Punjab'.[117] Furthermore, 'for the 90 per cent of the Musalmans, the liquidation of unemployment and indebtedness is most important. A programme for social health, educational and improvement of economic conditions, must form the most important issues.'[118] Ali advocated 'an honourable settlement' with the Congress: 'After all the Jinnah–Rajendra Prasad talks of 1935

did succeed remarkably well up to a point. Is it impossible therefore to resume the thread of the suspended negotiations? I can't help feeling that whatever may be the responsibility of those who would claim the political allegiance of the Musalmans is by no means inconsiderable.'[119] Ali reasoned with Jinnah in this vein and strove hard to impress upon him that 'the younger generations crave' for a settlement. 'Must we ignore this?' he asked.[120] And finally he pointed out that 'there are some' among the Muslims 'who would have us build up a Muslim Empire in India. They are unbalanced visionaries . . . They are a band of vocal communalists.'[121] Jinnah acknowledged the letter politely and asked for a continuing dialogue with him. But these arguments did not cut much ice with Jinnah who moved on to his chosen path of creating an organization of Muslims to capture power.

As for the vision of a 'Muslim empire' Jinnah, astute politician as he was, put it in this way: 'It would be no use indulging in talk like saying that Muslims had ruled over this country for centuries in the past and had a right to rule even now.'[122] Whether he believed in the supremacy of the Muslims or not, the fact is that he reminded his audience at the Anglo-Arab College of their great past; though this was of 'no use' saying so, yet he said it. Again in 1941, while addressing the mammoth gathering at Madras on 13 April 1941, he said: 'Since the fall of the Moghul Empire, Muslim India was never so well organized nor so alive and politically as conscious as today.'[123] Enunciating the principle that 'politics means power and not relying on cries of justice or fairplay or good will', he went on to declare: 'It does not require political wisdom to realize that all safeguards and settlements would be a scrap of paper, unless they are backed up by power.'[124] Hence, he exhorted the Muslims to arise, awake and organize under one great organization, the Muslim League. Power would come from the solidarity of the Muslim community: 'Honorable settlement can only be achieved between equals and, unless the two parties learn to respect and fear each other, there is not solid ground for any settlement.'[125]

All along since 1937 Jinnah had been making a forceful emotive appeal for Muslim solidarity with the sole object of wresting power from the 'Hindu' Congress. Not a single meeting passed without reference to the spectre of 'Hindu domination' over the great Muslim community, which had ruled over them for centuries. There could hardly be any more forceful way of arousing communal passions against another community. Jinnah truly masterminded a hate campaign against Hindus and the Congress. He told the large, young and impressionable audience at the Aligarh Muslim University on 5 February 1938: 'To a great extent the Muslim League has freed the Musalmans from the clutches of the British Government. But now there is another power which claims to be the successor of the British Government. Call it by whatever name you like, but it is a Hindu Government.'[126] The Aligarh Muslim University formed the nucleus of6 the Pakistan Movement.

Between 1937 and 1939 Congress-led ministries had been formed in six provinces. The Muslim League led by Jinnah began a relentless, loose and malicious propaganda campaign against those governments accusing them of 'tyranny and oppression' over the minority community. No specific charges were made. The press notes issued from time to time mentioned the 'anti-Muslim, oppressive and tyrannical rule of the Congress'. No details of the so-called 'Congress atrocities' were given. The All India Muslim League formed a subcommittee of members from the Central Provinces (CP) and Berar, UP, Bihar and other places which assembled on 10 May 1939, and a decision was taken to tour the whole country highlighting the excesses of Congress-led governments.[127] Enquiry committees were formed and two reports known as the Pirpur Report, dealing with 'atrocities' in UP, and the Shareef Report, regarding Bihar, were produced. No one seems to have read the reports. Jinnah in any case did not seem to have read them. It was not important for him to do so. A man who claimed to be honest and a man of integrity did not even care to verify the truth of those allegations. No discussion was ever taken with the Congress governments regarding these issues. Explanations voluntarily offered by the various governments were brushed aside. The Governors of Bombay and Madras were on record that they were by far the best-run governments, and were mostly secular. Harry Haig, the Governor of UP observed: 'The Congress of course, though consisting predominantly of Hindus, always professes and to a large extent pursues a non-communal policy...'[128] He further pointed out that, although the 'Hindu religion is at the moment exceedingly vigorous and displaying a very marked vitality', yet 'when an attempt was made at the time of general election to use Hindu religious feeling for political purposes in opposition to the Congress it was a complete failure'.[129] He spoke highly of the government of UP in dealing with communal strife and felt that Pant, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai and Mrs Vijayalakshmi Pandit conducted themselves with a great deal of impartiality. The same could be said of the Madras government. It was stated that it was the best administered province under C. Rajagopalachari. Similarly, no complaints whatsoever were sent to the Viceroy Linlithgow from the Governor of Bombay, and Linlithgow, when approached by Jinnah for 'executive action' against the Congress-ruled government, refused to oblige him in spite of his closeness to Jinnah.

Govind Ballabh Pant and Gandhi offered to have the Pirpur Report and other specific charges examined by the chief justice, Sir Maurice Gwyer, but Jinnah refused and said: 'I offered to accept a Royal Commission consisting of two Judges of the English High Court and presided over by a Lord of the Privy Council.'[130] Jinnah was fully aware that his suggestion would be turned down by the British government. He knew fully well that Sir Maurice Gwyer would be impartial in his judgement. Besides, Lord Linlithgow said that there were no cases of 'unjust treatment of the Muslims'

and none were brought 'to his notice' by any of the governors. At a conference in London, Sir Francis Wylie, Governor of UP from 1945 to 1947, 'dismissed the atrocities stories as moonshine'.[131]

However flimsy or unfounded the allegations of atrocities were, Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy, enquired of Sir Maurice Hallett, Sir Francis Wylie and Sir Harry Haig, Governors of Bihar, CP and Berar, and UP respectively, whether the complaints made had any element of truth in them. Both Hallett and Wylie replied discounting any substance in the allegations of oppression or suppression of Muslims in their provinces. According to their considered view and judgement neither were there any infringements of rules in respect of appointments, nor were there cases of denial of employment opportunities to Muslims. Linlithgow sent these replies to Lord Zetland, then Secretary of State for India, and asked for Haig's consent so that his 'interesting' and lucid observations, based on enquiries and appropriate investigation, could also be sent for the perusal of Lord Zetland.[132]

The United Provinces, now Uttar Pradesh, held a vital position in Hindu–Muslim relations. While the Muslims constituted only 14 per cent of the population of UP, they controlled 66 per cent of the land revenue demand, the land having been parcelled out to them as landowners, the *taluqdars*. In 1901 there were as many as 270 *taluqdars* in the Oudh region, of whom 176 were Muslims. On the whole the Muslims owned more than 64 per cent of the total *taluqdari* assets in UP,[133] and most of them were supporters of the Muslim League. Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, the general secretary of the All India Muslim League, was a prominent landholder in Muzzaffarnagar. Similarly, most of the Hindu *taluqdars* supported the Hindu political group recently formed in 1924 as Hindu Mahasabha. In this Muslim-minority province, Muslims in fact wielded enormous power and influence; and economically they were very well-off and powerful. They supported the British Raj and were members of powerful and influential bodies like the UP legislature and Governor's Council and other administrative organs of the government.

The theory of relative deprivation, often advanced to explain the causes of tension between the Hindus and Muslims, does not seem to be applicable to UP. The Muslim representation in the various services was substantial. If selected on the basis of the population their number would have been much less. In the provincial executive service, Muslims had nearly 40 per cent of posts; in the provincial judicial service, they constituted 25 per cent; in the subordinate services, as *tehsildars* and *naib tehsildars*, the percentages were 43.6 and 41 respectively; in the provincial police services, Muslims occupied 28 per cent of posts; as sub-inspectors of police, the Muslims held 44 per cent of posts, and as head constables 64 per cent; in subordinate agricultural services, 25 per cent; and as gazetted officers of the cooperative department, they were 37 per cent.[134]

Thus, the complaints of lack of employment opportunities for Muslims do not hold good. The members of the two dominant communities, Hindus and Muslims, had almost equal shares in trade, industry and various other occupations.[135] However, there was a declining trend in respect of Muslim ownership of land. Most of the landowners, whether Hindu or Muslim, were absentee landlords. But among Muslims this phenomenon was more pronounced. Most Muslims tended to migrate to urban centres once they had some assets, and they invested in trade or took up some other profession. The net decrease of the Muslim population living on agriculture was 57.6 per cent between 1881 and 1921 in UP. Basically, a Muslim was a town dweller. Also, the artisan castes among Hindus and Muslims tended to flock to towns in search of better economic opportunities. Yet the artisans and craft workers were losing occupations, especially between 1911 and 1921. The economic climate was so gloomy that the declining trend seemed universal. Muslim tenants, workers, artisans and craft workers were as badly off as their Hindu counterparts.[136] Most complaints of unjust treatment originated from the upper-class Muslims and not so much from the Muslim masses. In the making of the Pakistan demand in the 1940s the role of this minority group of the Muslim community was very significant indeed. The Muslim masses converged and supported them once the slogan 'Islam in danger' was raised and gained ground.

Harry Haig, the Governor of UP, received from Sir Ziauddin Ahmad a list of grievances against the Congress-led government in UP. Haig had the complaints properly investigated and found to his great satisfaction and relief that most of them were not sustainable. The list was divided into 'general' and 'special complaints'.

Haig first thought of sending an elaborate and comprehensive reply: 'But when I looked into them [the complaints] closely, I reached the conclusion that they do not really merit any very elaborate answers.'[137] The complaints, which had been listed under the head 'general' in fact

> represent an indictment of the general policy and administration of the Congress Ministry. While I am far from suggesting that there is not plenty of ground for criticism . . . there is nothing specifically Muslim in all this. The general political criticism is the stock in trade of the opposition, voiced by non-Congress Hindus as much as by Muslims, while my own anxieties connected with these matters have related to general administrative conditions and not specifically to Muslim problems. They are only represented as Muslim grievances because the Muslim Community as a whole is a political opposition.[138]

Haig emphatically turned down 'in this connection the task of a general review of the provincial adminsitration'.[139]

'The real grievances of the Muslims under this head [general] is that they have no political pull.' In respect of 'petty political jobbery' they were 'left out in the cold' and 'until they themselves formed part of the government and could share in the little jobs',[140] they continued to grumble. As far as the 'special' complaints were concerned, they could be divided into three categories. First, it was stated that there was trouble in the villages of Muslim landlords. Second, communal riots occurred frequently and the government was allegedly partial in handling them. Third, Muslim officers bore the brunt of official action against them for corruption charges and so on.

Haig pointed out that 'there were troubles in villages of landlords of all communities. Congress tried to stir up trouble in the villages of those landlords who are their prominent political opponents, and Muslims to a large extent came under this category. But they are not attacked *qua* Muslims but *qua* opponents of the Congress. Those Muslim landlords who choose to pay blackmail to these local Congressmen (and one of the largest *taluqdars* undoubtedly has done this) have little or no trouble from their tenants. But Hindu landlords suffer in exactly the same way.'[141] Complaints from Hindus and Muslims alike were received: tenants as a class had supported the Congress in the past and the Congress in turn was bound to take care of their interests and protect their rights against infringements and illegal imposition of cesses etc. from the landed classes.[142]

As for their handling of the communal riots, Haig was categorical in his statement that the government was 'impartial'; he was also full of praise for the government, for having invariably taken prompt action against the culprits and controlled the situation effectively. He said: 'In general I think it is correct to say that the Provincial Ministry has done its best to be impartial in communal matters and with very fair success. Their good intentions have not however saved them from ceaseless attacks on communal grounds from both sides... At the present moment the Hindus are exceedingly loud in their complaints against the government on the ground that they show undue favour to Muslims.'[143]

Unfortunately, regarding the incidents of communal flare-ups resulting in loss of life and property in Kanpur, Marehra town situated in Etah *tehsil*, and the town of Badaun, about which Sir Ziauddin complained, Haig pointed out that it was 'really aggressive action by Muslims which started the chain of events'.[144] In the towns dominated by Muslims communal riots occurred on trivial grounds, whereas in the countryside, the rural folk comprising mostly Hindus damaged Muslim property or took away crops from the fields as revenge.[145]

About the Pirpur Report, Haig stated the report did devote 'some space to this kind of happening and has produced very little in the way of solid facts in its support as far as UP is concerned'.[146]

In the rural development programme, 'out of 789 rural development organisers 20 per cent are Muslims, this is not a reasonably low percentage seeing that these men have to be taken from the rural classes and that the Muslim population in this province is largely concentrated in the towns'.[147] Haig continued to enlighten on each of the important charges or complaints put forward by Ziauddin Ahmad. It was pointed out that some corruption charges were brought against the Muslim officers during the Pant ministry. Haig reported that 'a very large number of officers of this class . . . who were selected for attack had made themselves obnoxious to the Congress' and 'it is not true now to say as a rule these Muslim officers are especially attacked'.[148] One could only imagine the way Muslims were mobilized and the officers in the government to go all out against the Civil Disobedience Movement and no-tax campaigns between 1930 and 1934. It is obvious that those who had been partial, biased and more loyal to the government than the British masters themselves must have suffered when the Congress came into power.

Finally, it was pointed out that out of six ministers in the Pant ministry, two were Muslims. The Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and the Deputy President of the Legislative Council were Muslims; one of the two directors of publicity was a Muslim. There were three Muslim parliamentary secretaries out of 13. Surely, Haig observed, 'The Muslim Ministers are certainly not unmindful of Muslim interests, but they are distrusted by the majority of the Muslims and denounced by the Muslim League.'[149]

Harry Haig was one of the few fair-minded, impartial true friends and well-wishers of India. He was a contrast to Malcolm Hailey whom he tried to educate and reform, impressing on him the changing political landscape in which the popular will as represented by the Indian National Congress was bound to prevail and it was the duty of the Indian Civil Service and the British personnel to adjust themselves to the demands of responsible government introduced under provincial autonomy as envisaged by the Government of India Act 1935. Haig was deeply concerned with the deterioration of Hindu–Muslim relations under Jinnah's leadership of the Muslim League and he tried his best to impress on the Congress leaders to come to terms with Jinnah. His observation, 'the one substantial grievance of the Muslims is that they have no share in the government', was worthy of attention. 'In essence the grievance is not a religious one though it assumes an intensely communal form. It is political and is due to the fact that the community is in opposition. It would largely cease to exist if the Muslim League had a share in the government.'[150] He suggested to Nehru that the cabinet should be recast to include Muslim League representatives. Haig recorded in the draft prepared for the Viceroy in May 1939: 'Actually, Nehru in his conversation with me indicated that such a development might not cause insuperable difficulties in this province, but he stressed the point that it was really an all-India problem.' If that is accepted as

a desirable end, the Congress ministries under the guidance of governors could use their influence in the same direction, it was argued.[151]

There appears to have been a realization among the Congress leaders that cabinet formation deserved greater attention and understanding than it had been given so far. However, time ran out for the Congress. The war intervened and there was hardly any dialogue with the Muslim League leaders on this question.

Meanwhile, the Jinnah and Nehru meeting scheduled to be held in December 1939 did not take place since 'Nehru was no longer willing to meet Jinnah in view of the decision of the latter to persist in holding a day of rejoicing at the disappearance of the Congress ministers on the 22nd of this month'.[152] The 'Day of Deliverance' was celebrated by the Muslim League on 22 December 1939, after the Congress governments resigned from office. Jinnah, displaying his characteristic acerbity and bitterness in his message to Muslims on the occasion, asked them to rejoice. Zetland noted, with some distaste, 'Muslims' dislike of Congress Ministers' and 'in Jinnah's case [this] amounts to violent hatred, [which] is a thing which has to be taken into account in a highly complex situation'.[153] Furthermore, the Muslim League, presumably with Jinnah's knowledge, had its newspapers *Manshoor* and *The Dawn* serialize the Pirpur Report under the heading 'It Shall Never Happen Again'.[154] This was despite the fact that the evidence left no doubt that the Pirpur Report was a myth. Jinnah and the Muslim League did not fail to utilize this myth of hatred and untruth for the purposes of mass mobilization of Muslims in the country for their political objective.

Leaving aside the question of whether the Pirpur Report was false or exaggerated, it was used by Jinnah for a frontal attack on the Congress. He declared: 'You have seen the Pirpur Report and I need not add to what has been described in the document.'[155] It is noteworthy that Jinnah did not say that he had read through the report himself; at no point in time did he utter a word about his having seen or read the report. He would have certainly said so, if only to emphasize the authenticity and the accuracy of the report, but he did not. Yet he went on in a most provocative denunciation of the Congress and Hindus:

> The position may be summed up in one sentence. Today Hindu mentality, Hindu outlook, is being carefully nurtured and Muslims are being forced to accept the Hindu ideals in their daily life. Have Muslims anywhere done anything of the sort? Have they anywhere sought to impose Muslim culture on the Hindus? Yet whenever Muslims have raised the slightest voice of protest they have been branded as communalists and disturbers of peace, and the repressive machinery of the Congress Governments has been set in motion against them . . . Who have suffered repression of culture under

> the Congress Governments? It is the Musalmans. Against whom are the repressive measures taken, prohibitory orders issued and among whom are arrests made? It is the Musalmans. I should like to know a single instance, . . . a single instance where the Muslim League or Muslim individuals may have tried to force their own culture upon the Hindus in the last eighteen months [cries: nowhere][156]

He cited the examples of Hindu cultural imposition of *Bande Mataram* as a national song; the use of the Congress flag as the national flag; Hindi as the national language; and the Wardha scheme of education being considered for all.[157] Jawaharlal Nehru explained that *Bande Mataram* was not adopted by the Congress as the national anthem, the national flag was adopted in 1929 by the Congress in full consultation with leaders of all communities and parties, and that the Congress policy was to make Hindustani, as written in Nagari and Urdu scripts, the national language. Yet the matter could be considered afresh if desired.[158]

As far as the Wardha scheme of education was concerned, it was not being imposed at all. It was an experiment conducted by educationists led by Dr Zakir Husain, whom Jinnah called a 'quisling' and a 'traitor'.[159] As for the *Bande Mataram* song, Chagla tells us in his autobiography that Maulana Mohammad Ali had established, during his student days at Oxford University, a national debating society the Nav Ratan Sabha, later the Indian Majlis. The proceedings of the Majlis and the earlier Sabha always started with the *Bande Mataram* song and all members – Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis etc. – sang it with great feeling.[160] But Jinnah objected to it saying 'It was idolatrous and a hymn of hate against Muslims.'[161] Jinnah must have sung this song on numerous occasions himself while attending the Indian National Congress sessions, but he did not object then. The talk of Hindi–Hindustani, he said, 'was intended to stifle and suppress Urdu'.[162] Jinnah was not interested in explanations and declared that the political problem which Muslims were faced with could be summed up thus: 'what little power and responsibility is for the Hindus; only the Congress masquerades under the name of nationalism'. And finally, Jinnah exploded, 'Britain wants to rule over India and Mahatma Gandhi wants to rule over Muslim India.'[163]

These then were the constant refrains of Jinnah in his speeches, press statements, circulars, Muslim League resolutions and correspondence with the British government officials. Though this propaganda was relentlessly carried out day in and day out, whether false or truthful, it hardly mattered either to Jinnah or his audience; what mattered most was its nature and impact, and Jinnah succeeded in creating a sense of deep communal cleavage and separateness in the collective consciousness of the Muslim community. He also cemented a bond of solidarity among

Muslims, on the one hand; on the other, his hate campaign against the Hindus and the Congress created feelings of antagonism, difficult to overcome. No wonder then that the Muslim League, which was in financial and organizational distress until 1936, grew in strength by leaps and bounds between 1937 and 1939, prompting Jinnah to boast of 'the miraculous progress' made by the Muslim League: 'Five years ago it was wretched. Three years ago you were dead and in three years the Muslim League has given a goal which in my judgement is going to lead to the promised land, where we shall establish our Pakistan.'[164]

Notes

1 For the text of the proposals see appendix (hereafter app.) 8 in S.A. Mujahid, *Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah: Studies in Interpretation* (Karachi: 1981), pp. 466–7.
2 Ibid., p. 467.
3 Ibid., app. 10, p. 477.
4 Ibid., app. 10, pp. 473–9 for the text of the Fourteen Points of Jinnah; the quote is on p. 475.
5 Ibid., p. 477.
6 Ibid., pp. 477–8.
7 Ibid., p. 20.
8 Ibid.
9 Wavell, *The Viceroy's Journal*, ed. Penderel Moon (Delhi: 1977), p. 147.
10 IOR/L/PJ/12/644, note prepared for home government by G. Ahmed, deputy secretary to Government of India (GOI).
11 The Nehru Report, pp. 43–4; *Selected Works of Motilal Nehru*, ed. Ravinder Kumar and H.D. Sharma (New Delhi: 1995), VI.
12 Chagla, *Roses in December*, p. 97.
13 Durga Das, *India from Curzon*, p. 155.
14 App. 10, p. 479 in Mujahid, *Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah*.
15 See Chapter 1.
16 Montagu, *An Indian Diary*, 27 November 1917, p. 68.
17 *Selected Works of Motilal Nehru*, VI, p. 268.
18 Ibid., pp. 273–6.
19 Ibid., pp. 275–6.
20 Ibid., p. 282.
21 Simon to Edward Codogan, 19 September 1928, Halifax Papers, quoted in *Selected Works of Motilal Nehru*, VI, p. 290.
22 Rao, *India's Freedom Movement*, p. 10.
23 Hailey to Brown, 22 September 1928, Malcolm Hailey Papers, Mss. Eur. E. 220/11A. Sir Zafrullah Khan, a prominent Muslim politician of the Punjab, was closely associated with the GOI in several capacities in his political and diplomatic career.
24 Ibid.
25 Hailey to Geoffrey de Montmorency, PS to Viceroy, 12 June 1926, Hailey Papers, Mss. Eur. E. 220/9B.
26 Ibid.
27 Hailey to Alexander Muddiman, home member, Viceroy's Council, 22 January 1927, Hailey Papers, Mss. Eur. E. 220/10A.
28 Hailey to Viceroy Reading, 22 January 1925, Hailey Papers, Mss. Eur. E. 220/7A.

29 Willingdon to Hailey, 5 June 1933, Hailey Papers, Mss. Eur. E. 220/10A.
30 Halifax Papers, Mss. Eur. C. 152/U.
31 Hailey to Fazli Husain, 25 August 1928, Hailey Papers, Mss. Eur. E. 220/13B.
32 Hailey Papers, Mss. Eur. E. 220/34.
33 5 September 1928, Hailey Papers, Mss. Eur. E. 220/13C.
34 Noon to Hailey, 2 November 1927, 6 November 1927, Hailey Papers, Mss. Eur. E. 220/11B.
35 Hailey to Brown, 11 October 1927, ibid.
36 Ibid.
37 Irwin to Simon, 26 February 1928, Hailey Papers, Mss. Eur. E. 220/12A.
38 Ibid.
39 Irwin to Birkenhead, 6 September 1928, *Selected Works of Motilal Nehru*, VI, p. 289.
40 Ibid.
41 Hailey to de Montmorency, 5 June 1920, Hailey Papers, Mss. Eur. E. 220/18C.
42 For example, Hailey to nawab of Chhattari, 1 May 1930, Hailey Papers, Mss. Eur. E. 220/18A.
43 According to the Intelligence Bureau's estimate nearly one-third of the Muslim population did participate in the Congress-led movements, OSS Report 112, IOR/L/PJ/12/652.
44 Hailey to nawab of Chhattari, 1 May 1930, Hailey Papers, Mss. Eur. E. 220/18A.
45 Harry Haig, Home Member, GG's Council, to Hailey, 19 June 1930, Hailey Papers, Mss. Eur. E. 220/18B.
46 K.B. Sayeed, *Pakistan, The Formative Phase* 1857–1948 (London: 1968), p. 178.
47 Ibid.
48 Jinnah's address, 5 February 1938, Jamil-ud-din Ahmed (ed.), *Some Recent Speeches and Writings of Mr Jinnah* (Lahore: 1942), p. 37.
49 Jawaharlal Nehru's 'Prison Diary', *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, ed. S. Gopal XIII, p. 355.
50 OSS Report 112 on Pakistan, IOR/L/PJ/12/652.
51 Durga Das, *India from Curzon*, p. 171.
52 Irwin to Hailey, 31 October 1927, Hailey Papers, Mss. Eur. E. 220/11B.
53 Fazli Husain to Sikander Hyat Khan, 6 May 1936, Fazli Husain Papers, Mss. Eur. E. 352/16.
54 Ibid.
55 22 April 1933, ibid.
56 Fazli Husain to Sikander, 6 May 1936, ibid.
57 Ibid.
58 Sikander to Fazli Husain, 13 May 1936, 30 June 1936, ibid.
59 Fazli Husain to Sikander, 8 November 1934, ibid.
60 Barakat Ali to Jinnah, 26 April 1937, Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah Papers, IOR. Neg. 10763, Reel 4.
61 Ibid.
62 Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah Papers, IOR. Neg. 10786, Reel 7.
63 For details of the document see Pirzada, *Evolution of Pakistan*, ch. 25, pp. 172–82.
64 Ibid., pp. 179–80.
65 OSS Report 112 on Pakistan, IOR/L/PJ/12/652.
66 Penderel Moon, *Divide and Quit* (London: 1961), p. 20.
67 Jinnah's telegrams, 6 July 1940, Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah Papers, IOR. Neg. 10777, Reel 18.
68 Sikander Hyat Khan to Jinnah, 8 July 1940, ibid.
69 Jinnah to Sikander, n.d., ibid.

70 Sikander to Jinnah, 8 July 1940, ibid.
71 H.V. Hodson's note, p. 3, 6 January 1939, Lumley Papers, IOR. Mss. Eur. F. 253/44.
72 Hodson's note, p. 3, ibid.
73 Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah Papers, IOR. Neg. 10777, Reel 18.
74 Baig, *Jinnah*, p. 7.
75 S.A. Latif's full proposal is available in Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah Papers, IOR. Neg. 10778, Reel 9.
76 Ibid.
77 Liaquat Ali Khan to Jinnah, 14 June 1939, Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah Papers, IOR. Neg. 10776, Reel 17.
78 Ibid.
79 Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah Papers, IOR. Neg. 10765, Reel 6.
80 Ibid.
81 Ibid.
82 Sikander to Jinnah, 25 December 1941, Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah Papers IOR. Neg. 10777, Reel 18.
83 Mirza M. Ahmad to Jinnah, 2 March 1947, Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah Papers, IOR. Neg. 10774, Reel 15.
84 Azad, *India Wins Freedom*, *The Complete Version* (Madras: 1988), p. 132.
85 OSS Report 112, IOR/L/PJ/12/652.
86 Ibid.
87 See fortnightly report. Up Home Sec. to Sec. Home GOI, 6 January 1946; 18 January 1946; 21 March 1946; 22 April 1946; 9 May 1946; 22 July 1946; IOR/L/PJ/5/275. Francis Wylie, Gov. of UP to Mountbatten, 9 June 1947; 10 August 1947; IOR/L/PJ/5/276. Also 20 November 1945; IOR/L/PJ/5/274.
88 Edward Thompson in *New Statesman and Nation*, December 1941, IOR/L/PJ/12/652.
89 Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, pp. 304–5.
90 OSS Report 112, IOR/L/PJ/12/652.
91 Ibid.
92 Ibid.
93 S.M. Ismail, MLC, Patna to Jinnah, 10 April 1939, Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah Papers, IOR. Neg. 10773, Reel 14.
94 Khalil Ahmed Siddiqui, Ghazipur Muslim Leaguer to Jinnah, 14 April 1939, ibid.
95 Miss Z.K. Rizvi to Jinnah, 13 April 1939, ibid.
96 Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah Papers, IOR. Neg. 10773, Reel 14.
97 *Hindustan Times*, editorial, ibid.
98 Editorial, 15 June 1939, Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah Papers, IOR. Neg. 10773, Reel 14.
99 Jinnah to Reja Ali, 8 July 1939, ibid.
100 10 April 1939, ibid.
101 See Chapter 1.
102 Wolpert, *Jinnah of Pakistan*, p. 281.
103 Chagla, *Roses in December*, pp. 80–2.
104 Rao, *India's Freedom Movement*, p. 16.
105 F. Moraes, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography* (New York: 1956), p. 268.
106 Haig to Linlithgow, 23 March 1938, Haig Papers, Mss. Eur. F. 115/17B, NMML, on microfilm.
107 Moon, *Divide and Quit*, p. 15.
108 Azad, *India Wins Freedom*, pp. 160–1 for a discussion of the 1937 ministry formation episode.
109 Haig to Linlithgow, 23 April 1937, Haig Papers, Mss. Eur. F. 115/17A.

110 S.R. Mehrotra, in his 'Congress and the Partition of India' writes that the *Leader* over-played its part and gave wide coverage to all kinds of rumours and happenings. See C.H. Philips and M.D. Wainwright (eds), *The Partition of India: Policies and Perspectives, 1935–1947* (London: 1970).
111 Jinnah's address, 22 March 1940, Lahore session of the AIML. See app. B for the text of the address, in Pirzada, *Evolution of Pakistan*, pp. 348–62. The quote is on pp. 350–1.
112 Haig, 8 April 1938, Haig Papers, Mss. Eur. F. 115/17B.
113 13 May 1938, ibid.
114 Haig to Linlithgow, 22 September 1937, ibid.
115 Jinnah's presidential address at the annual session of AIML held at Patna, 26–29 December 1938. See Ahmad, *Some Recent Speeches and Writings of Mr Jinnah*, p. 67.
116 Asaf Ali to Jinnah, 4 May 1937, Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah Papers, IOR. Neg. 10763, Reel 4.
117 Ibid.
118 Ibid.
119 Ibid.
120 Ibid.
121 Ibid.
122 Jinnah's speech on the unveiling of the portrait of late Maulana Shaukat Ali at the Anglo-Arabic College, n.d., Ahmad, *Some Recent Speeches and Writings of Mr Jinnah*, p. 127.
123 Ahmed, *Some Recent Speeches and Writings of Mr Jinnah*, p. 236.
124 Ibid.
125 Presidential address, Lucknow session of AIML, October 1937, Ahmad, ibid, p. 29.
126 Ahmed, *Some Recent Speeches and Writings of Mr Jinnah*, p. 39.
127 Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah Papers, IOR. Neg. 10765, Reel 6.
128 8 April 1938, Haig Papers, Mss. Eur. F. 115/17B.
129 23 April 1938, ibid.
130 Ahmed, *Some Recent Speeches and Writings of Mr Jinnah*, pp. 130–1.
131 Rao, *India's Freedom Movement*, p. 128.
132 Linlithgow to Haig, 13 May 1939, Haig Papers, Mss. Eur. F. 115/5.
133 *List of Taluqdars as Corrected up to 1903* (Lucknow: 1905).
134 G.N. Shrivastava, *When Congress Ruled: A Close Range Survey of the Congress Administration During 1937–39* (Lucknow: n.d.), pp. 101–2.
135 See data of occupation by religion, *Census Report of UP, 1921*, ch. XVI, part II, table 20. Also see Census Report, 1931.
136 *Census Report of UP, 1921*, ch. XIX, subsidiary table 1, p. 155.
137 Haig to Linlithgow, 10 May 1939, Haig Papers, Mss. Eur. F. 115/5. Ziauddin Ahmed was vice-chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University and leader of the Muslim League Party in the UP Legislative Council.
138 Ibid.
139 Ibid.
140 Ibid.
141 Ibid.
142 Ibid. Also see UP fortnightly reports of 9 May 1939.
143 Ibid., para 2(b & c).
144 Ibid.
145 Ibid., para 3(d).
146 Ibid., para 3(e).

147 Ibid., para 3(f).
148 Ibid., para 3(g).
149 Ibid.
150 Ibid., para 4.
151 Draft para 8, May 1939, for Linlithgow, Haig Papers, Mss. Eur. F. 115/5.
152 Based on Reuters information, Zetland to Linlithgow, 20 December 1939, para 2, Linlithgow Papers, Mss. Eur. F. 125/8.
153 Zetland to Linlithgow, 19/20 September 1939, Linlithgow Papers, Mss. Eur. F. 125/8, p. 29.
154 Gowher Rizvi, *Linlithgow and India: A Study of British Policy and the Political Impasse in India, 1936–43* (London: 1978), p. 126.
155 Presidential address, annual session of AIML at Patna, 26–29 December 1939, Ahmed *Some Recent Speeches and Writings of Mr Jinnah*, p. 71.
156 Ibid.
157 Ibid., pp. 70–1.
158 Also home dept. report on 'The Congress and the Muslim League', prepared by G. Ahmed of the GOI for the SOS, IOR/L/PJ/12/644.
159 Wavell's interview with Jinnah, 18 June 1946, Wavell Papers, Mss. Eur. D. 977/17.
160 Chagla, *Roses in December*, p. 34.
161 Ahmed, *Some Recent Speeches and Writings of Mr Jinnah*, p. 70.
162 Ibid., p. 27.
163 Ibid.
164 Address to Indian Muslim Students Federation, Nagpur, 26 December 1941, Ahmed, *Some Recent Speeches and Writings of Mr Jinnah*, p. 302.

3

THE SECOND WORLD WAR, THE CONSERVATIVES AND THE MUSLIM LEAGUE

Poland was invaded by Germany on 1 September 1939. Great Britain and France pledged their full support to Poland against the Nazi aggression on 3 September 1939. On the same day Viceroy Lord Linlithgow declared that India was a party in the war and expressed his hope that 'India will make her contribution on the side of human freedom as against the rule of force, and will play her part worthy of her place among the great nations and the historic civilizations of the world'.[1] On 4 September 1939, he asked Jinnah for 'his help towards securing the whole hearted support of the Muslim Community everywhere'.[2] Linlithgow also invited Gandhi for an interview the same day and asked him for his support and that of the Indian National Congress in the war effort.

Winston Churchill and the Conservative stance

Without the consent of the popularly elected governments of nine of the 11 provinces of British India, which were ruled by Congress ministries (the other two provinces were run by the Muslim League), Viceroy Lord Linlithgow made a declaration that India was *ipso facto* at war against the Axis powers. The Congress took exception to this, describing Linlithgow's unilateral declaration as a national affront, and sought from the government its war aims to enable Congress to consider supporting the British war effort. Jinnah's Muslim League did not raise any question of this nature and seemed willing to support the British in return for certain concessions. The question of the declaration of war aims became a major issue of wartime politics between the Congress and the British government in India and in Britain. It became a focal point of the conflictual relationship between the central government and the Indian National Congress. Thereafter, one crisis situation led to another; the protagonists in this drama were none other than Winston Churchill and Lord Linlithgow, who contributed in no small measure to the breakdown of relations.

However, before the question of war aims against the background of wartime politics is examined, it must be emphasized that the Second World War had created a grave situation and the survival of Great Britain was at stake. During this period when Britain 'faced supreme mortal danger' Winston Churchill strode as a colossus awakening the nation 'through his eloquence and inspiration, his passionate desire for freedom and his ability to inspire others with that same desire . . . and to make every man, every woman, a part of that national purpose'. These were Harold Wilson's words about Churchill, 'whose record of leadership in those five years [1940–45] speaks for itself beyond the power of words of any of us to enhance or even to assess. This was his finest hour, Britain's finest hour.'[3] This was a glowing tribute paid by a Labour Prime Minister who was a staunch opponent of the Conservative Party and its politics. It was Churchill whose wartime contributions brought back the lost glory of Britain.

No other individual in British history has received so much acclamation as Winston Churchill. His years of leadership during the war were indeed great; in his own words, he felt he was 'walking with destiny'. A man of indomitable courage, he proved to be a genius in matters of war. His chief claim to fame rests in the way he led the British people, rescuing them from the brink of defeat and disaster to victory, bringing glory and honour for Britain. As a war hero he attained the highest pinnacle of glory. Most of the eulogies heaped on him add lustre to his imposing personality. It is worth recalling the memorable words uttered by him at the luncheon hosted by the Lord Mayor of London at the Mansion House on 10 November 1942. The speech cast a magical spell on the collective consciousness of the British people as well as Indians who loved liberty and democracy most of all. Churchill's inspiring words were: 'I have never promised anything but blood, tears, toil and sweat', and the entire British nation had risen like one man to defend their freedom and country. With pride Churchill continued: 'Now, however, we have a new experience. We have victory – a remarkable and definite victory' and the Germans have received back 'that measure of fire and steel which they have meted out to others'.[4] He had endeared himself to the nation and invoked noble patriotic feelings and nationalist sentiments in arousing them to action.

But Churchill was neither a man of peace nor was he a statesman in relation to India. It was not merely 'Churchillian negativism',[5] as R.J. Moore suggests, but it was his overbearing and ill-informed attitude, totally prejudicial and biased, and his refusal to see reason which brought immense misery to the people of India; and which were unworthy of his genius and greatness. His diehard rigidities, ingrained as they were in his imperialist world-view, and his determination to stamp out the legitimate aspirations for freedom and democracy, for which the British fought the war, have been glossed over by historians, biographers and contemporary opinion makers of all kinds.

At the same Mansion House speech he went on to stress the point that while Britain had not entered the war 'for profit or expansion, but only for honour and to do our duty in defending the right', but 'we mean to hold our own. I have not become the King's First Minister in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire.' For this task, if it were to be prescribed, 'someone will have to be found', and under democracy 'I suppose the nation would have to be consulted'.[6]

Indian public opinion has been more or less unanimous in condemning Winston Churchill's unreasonableness and his vehement opposition to India's claims for self-government and for equal terms with Britain. Churchill remained until the end an imperialist *par excellence*. He denounced the largest political party of India, the Indian National Congress, as a Hindu party dominated by 'the Hindu priesthood and caucus'[7] and declared that he would not tolerate 'the policy of running after Gandhi and the Congress, which the Viceroy conceives it his duty to pursue, which is steadily wearing down every pillar of British authority'.[8] And he rejected the proposal of the Secretary of State for India, Lord Zetland, to convene in March 1940 a small conference of Indian leaders for discussion on constitution making. Churchill firmly held the view that the 'Hindu–Muslim feud' was a 'bulwark of British rule in India',[9] its corollary being that no attempt should be made to bridge the gulf separating them. Even Churchill's Conservative Party colleagues, most of whom supported his government with devotion, felt his attitude towards India was often unreasonable and thoughtless. Linlithgow considered him 'a magnificent war leader' but he 'did not like him'.[10] Leopold Amery, serving as Secretary of State for India from 1940 to 1945 under Churchill, has this to say: 'Winston was as usual on any subject in which the idea of giving anybody self-government comes into play entirely unreasonable and, indeed, silly.'[11] And, again, 'Winston has no doubt great qualities as a war leader but when it comes to economics, he is a quite out of date old man unaware of anything that has happened since about 1880.'[12]

Leo Amery was one of the most perceptive and well-informed observers of world affairs and Indian politics in particular. He was born in India, at Gorakhpur in UP, and was endowed with 'many rare qualifications: he took a first in greats at Balliol and was a Fellow of All Souls, Oxford, with a deep knowledge of history and had a host of friends and acquaintances throughout the Empire and in Europe. He was an acute observer of events and of people.'[13] He held many positions in several Cabinets and was Secretary of State for the Dominions, and for India over the years. He was a Conservative MP from 1911 to 1945. He himself has been branded an 'imperialist', but compared to Churchill and others he appeared much more balanced and liberal. His views of men and affairs and of British Indian politics must inevitably command respect. He records in his diaries details of significant events and happenings and captures rare moments of the

Cabinet discussions which reveal the characteristics of the people involved. Leo Amery's diaries not only have the imprint of authenticity but are also most revealing about Indian politics.

About Winston Churchill's views on India, Amery once observed: 'For all his brilliance and greatness in Debate he has no notion of the problem at all.'[14] Amery records that the Cabinet had met on 6 October 1942 to discuss the upcoming India debate scheduled for 8 October: 'Winston opened with a terrific tirade just shouting at us all about the whole monstrous business of being kicked out of India and apologising for ourselves while at the same time sacrificing life and treasure for her defence.'[15] On another occasion worse was to follow. There was considerable American pressure on Britain for a dialogue with political leaders in India. The Cabinet met on 12 November 1942. There was a mild suggestion that 'Rajagopalachari should be encouraged to come here'. Amery also pointed out that they should do something to show that things are 'moving somehow'. Amery at this point records: 'suddenly Winston went off the deep end in a state of frantic passion on the whole subject of the humiliation of being kicked out of India by the beastliest people in the World next to Germans, threatening if he were pushed much further to drop everything else and stump the country rousing Conservatives against this shame – all sort of things I have had to suffer at intervals whenever India has come up before the Cabinet, but more violent perhaps than ever before. Everybody looked down their noses and said nothing though Smuts must have thought it very strange.' Those who had attended the Cabinet were Anderson, Bevin, Cripps, Smuts and Amery.[16]

It is important to evaluate Winston Churchill's role during the period of war, while he was in power, and that of other members of the Conservative Party, who refused to consider any attempt at constitutional advance made either by the British Labour Party or the Indian National Congress. Churchill was the First Lord of Admiralty during 1939–40 in the Neville Chamberlain ministry. After Chamberlain's resignation in May 1940, Churchill was sworn in as Prime Minister on 10 May 1940. He remained in office until July 1945, when the Conservatives were defeated and the Labour Party took office. As long as Churchill held a position of power he opposed any move towards a settlement of India's political problem. Often he fought fiercely inside Parliament and outside for the retention of British rule over India. His overweening ambition seemed to be the continuation of the British empire, if possible for ever. His passion for the empire was well known. However, less well-known was the depth of his contempt and his denunciation of the aspirations of the reawakened and regenerated people like the Indians. It was not merely his obsession and tenacious adherence to the doctrine of empire which had conditioned his mind, but it was his anti-Hindu stance and in some measure racist consciousness which had remained uninformed by 'the winds of change', which his

younger disciples in politics like Harold Macmillan had noted. He remained unreformed in his outlook almost until the end of his life. Kipling was no longer the craze, and he was mocked even in the 1920s by the literati in England. E.M. Foster's great novel *Passage to India*, published in 1924, which had brought to life a fine portrayal of what is generally known as 'the Indian Civil Service racialism', was despised by English men of the 1920s.[17]

When the *Indian Gazette* of 31 October 1929 pointed out that the goal of dominionhood proposed by Lord Irwin was in 'the humane enlightened tradition of the Raj', Winston Churchill 'was demented with fury'. When Lord Irwin suggested that he might like to talk with the leaders of the Congress to update his views on India, he replied, 'I am quite satisfied with my views of India, and I don't want them disturbed by any bloody Indians.'[18] Churchill still admired Queen Victoria's saying: 'I think it is very unwise to give up what we hold.' Churchill was a 'mid-Victorian', Amery recalled in August 1929, 'steeped in the policy of his father's period and unable ever to get the modern point of view. It is only verbal exuberance and abounding vitality that conceals this elementary fact about him.'[19] While many of the British intelligentsia had moved towards egalitarianism, social justice and democracy, not only for their homeland but also for the subject peoples like the Indians, many others, who wielded power and influence, continued to believe that India was after all a vassal state and hence racial prejudice and racial intolerance was quite a virtue. Unfortunately, Churchill was imbued with beliefs of such a nature; he belonged to a superior civilization; Britain had rescued India 'from ages of barbarism, internecine war and tyranny'; 'its slow but ceaseless forward march to civilization' constituted 'the finest achievement of our history'; and this process must not be stopped by granting self-government or dominion status lest India reverts 'to fierce racial and religious dissension . . . The idea [of dominion status] was fantastic in itself but criminally mischievous in its effects.'[20]

Addressing the first meeting of the Indian Empire Society on 11 December 1930, he warned his audience:

> The extremists [meaning the Congress leadership] who are, and will remain, the dominant force among the Indian political classes have in their turn moved their goal forward for absolute independence . . . When they will obtain complete control of the whole of Hindustan, when the British will be no more to them than any other European nation, when white people will be in India only upon sufferance, when debts and obligations of all kinds will be repudiated and when an army of white janissaries, officered if necessary from Germany, will be hired to secure the armed ascendancy of the Hindu.[21]

First and foremost, Churchill's forebodings proved unfounded. In fact, after independence the Indo-British relations became much more cordial and profitable with abundant goodwill on both sides based on a partnership on equal terms as members of a multiracial, multi-religious and multicoloured British Commonwealth of Nations. Second, his views expressed at the Empire Society meeting did not go unchallenged. The same day Lord Irwin wrote to Geoffrey Dawson, the editor of *The Times*, 'What a monstrous speech Winston just made.'[22] On 13 December 1930, *The Times* wrote in its leading article:

> Some of the comments in Mr Churchill's latest speech on India seem almost as remote from realities as the orator himself. Thus it was suggested in one or two quarters yesterday that the speech required a prompt repudiation by Mr Baldwin as though it has been delivered on behalf of the Conservative Party and was to be taken as representing their views. Nothing, as a matter of fact, could possibly be more misleading than to pay Mr Churchill, the tribute of a formal disclaimer . . .[23]

The Round Table Conference was going on at this time and it was most inopportune for Churchill to pronounce his judgement about India.

Sir Francis Younghusband of 'Mission to Tibet' fame wrote to *The Times* of 13 December 1930:

> Mr Churchill is never happy unless he is making a noise . . . What is stirring there is a good deal more than the Gandhism of which he spoke . . . But what is animating India is a passionate spirit of nationality . . . Indian nationality is indeed a thing of which Englishmen should be proud, for it is almost as much a product of our own as of Indians. It is something to be tended and guided, cherished and nourished, as being the one essential ingredient in building up a strong, united and prosperous India.[24]

Winston Churchill was the last person to be educated about such views. In his message to the Movitone News on 12 March 1931, he said: 'Things are going from bad to worse. Great mismanagement and weakness are causing unrest and disturbance *through three hundred million primitive people* whose well being is in our care. The confusion which exists in the political parties at home may well produce chaos in India.'[25]

His disregard and insensitivity to the political aspirations of Indians was incredible, when even 'imperialist conservatives' like Leo Amery, Lord Zetland and Lord Linlithgow were prepared to move forward for settlement of the constitutional issue in India. His denunciation of Gandhi as 'a malignant and subversive fanatic', a cynical manipulator

of 'Brahmins who mouth and patter principles of Western liberalism and pose as philosophers of democratic politics'[26] was to say the least an extreme absurdity.

The Amery diary of 9 September 1942 has this entry about Winston Churchill's outbursts, racial in character: 'I forgot to mention that during my talk with Winston he burst out with "I hate Indians. They are a beastly people with a beastly religion." '[27] His oft-repeated aversion to Indians, their culture, their religion in general, and his deep-seated dislike and hostility towards Hindus posed a serious problem in the negotiations between the Congress and the British government in India under Linlithgow, who was a close confidant of Churchill and held similar views. The Congress was an 'extremist party' dominated by a 'Hindu priesthood' and Gandhi was the best example of Congress ideology.[28] Throughout his political career Winston Churchill had never reconciled himself to Gandhi and in Cabinet meetings he often raised 'the Gandhi bogey', which seems to have 'frightened' even radicals like Morrison and Bevin, if Lord Wavell is to be believed.[29] Churchill looked down upon Gandhi with utter distaste. He pointed out: 'It was alarming and also nauseating to see Mr Gandhi, a seditious Middle Temple lawyer, now posing as a fakir or a type well-known to the East, striding half naked up the steps of the Viceregal Palace, while he is still organizing and conducting a defiant campaign of civil disobedience to parley on equal terms with representative of the King–Emperor.'[30] Yet when Gandhi was in England attending the Round Table Conference in December 1931, he was welcomed by the British people of all shades of opinion and was invited to by the King, but Churchill never met Gandhi. Later, while appointing Lord Wavell as the Viceroy of India, he took from him a promise that he would not invite Gandhi for talks, and when Lord Wavell later asked Prime Minister Winston Churchill to permit him to meet or release Gandhi, he said only 'over my dead body'.[31]

On the issue of Gandhi's threat to undertake a fast unto death in February 1943, Amery received Linlithgow's telegrams, 'a sheaf of them', asking for advice about whether Gandhi should be released from jail to enable him to fast 'on the understanding that he was to be re-interned at the end of the fast' since the government did not want to see Gandhi die in prison. Amery records: 'Winston was in his most aggressive mood. Beginning on Gandhi… only Attlee mildly ventured to point out that India was a big country and the veneration of Gandhi as a saint did affect the situation.'[32] Later during the discussion in the Cabinet, the threat of resignation by members of the Executive Council of the Viceroy was raised. Amery reported that Churchill said: 'What should it matter if a few black moors resigned! We could show to the world that we are governing.'[33]

The racist overtones in Winston Churchill's observations were obvious. Around this time it was reported that the 'noisy activity' and 'erratic explosions of the PM' were somewhat wearing down the Secretary of

State, who said that he 'so dominated Cabinet proceedings that members were cowed into silence'.[34] On 14 October 1943, Amery records that Wavell felt that 'Winston was getting dictatorial and too incapable of listening to anything except his own monologue.'[35] On 10 July 1945, Cabinet met to consider Lord Wavell's proposals for further discussion with Jinnah and other parties before the conference assembled on 14 July 1945. This was after Jinnah had insisted on the inclusion of Muslims nominated by the Muslim League, which had not been agreed by Lord Wavell, and the Simla Conference had ended in failure. Amery's diary notes: 'I wished afterwards I had never brought the matter to the Cabinet at all, for the amount of nonsense talked was incredible. The real trouble is that neither Simon nor Butler want the thing to succeed while Grigg is completely obsessed by his hatred of all Hindus and of Indian business in particular.'[36]

On 12 July 1945, the Cabinet met again. 'At the end I raised the breakdown of the Simla Conference owing to Jinnah's insistence that not even one non-Muslim League member should be included in the Executive… I am sorry to say that the Cabinet mostly seemed pleased.'[37]

Winston Churchill's anti-Hindu bias was informed and reinforced by works like Katherine Mayo's *Mother India,* which was published in 1927 and went into 40 reprints within three and half years.[38] William Manchester, biographer of Winston Churchill, points out that *Mother India* was 'vile in its insinuations, wildly inaccurate, and above all hypocritical, the single volume by an elderly prig, poisoned the minds of millions who might otherwise have reflected thoughtfully on Gandhi's movement'.[39] Churchill had read the book in 1927. One of his guests, Victor Cazalet, recorded in his diary on 10 August 1927 that Churchill 'admires the book *Mother India* and would have no mercy with the Hindus who marry little girls aged ten'.[40] On 27 September 1927, Lord Lloyd wrote to Lord Irwin: 'I was staying a weekend recently with Winston who was immediately struck with *Mother India* – Miss Mayo's book. It is all true.'[41] Gandhi called the book a 'Drain Inspector's Report' and the book created an uproar in India, the USA and Great Britain. It became controversial all the more because Miss Mayo's visit was supported by men like Sir Malcolm Hailey, then Governor of the Punjab and later of UP. Several letters were exchanged between Miss Mayo and Malcolm Hailey. Katherine Mayo thanked Hailey for the help he gave her and in one of her letters praises the government for the great work performed by the British but blames it for not supporting missionary activity, which was so essential to save the souls of 'the miserable heathens' in India.[42] Katherine Mayo enjoyed viceregal hospitality when in India and met several Tory Members of Parliament in London before embarking on her mission to India.

Beverley Nichols's *Verdict on India*[43] was also an instant success in the market owing to its racy style and its virulent attacks on Indians, and

Hinduism in particular. Winston Churchill wrote to Lady Churchill on 1 February 1945 recommending the book to her:

> I think you would do well to read it. It is written with some distinction and a great deal of thought. It certainly shows the Hindu and his true character and the sorry plight to which we have reduced ourselves by losing in our mission . . . I have had for sometime a feeling of despair about the British connection with India and still more about what will happen if it is suddenly broken . . . I agree with the book and also with its conclusion – Pakistan.

Since Winston Churchill, a man of literary credentials, who was later awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, read *Verdict on India* 'with great interest' and recommended it to his wife, the book ought to receive our attention too. It was given to him by Jock Colville, his private secretary, who urged him to take it to Yalta. Colville recorded in his diary that the PM told him he had read the 'book with great interest . . . The PM said the Hindus were a foul race protected by their mere pullulation from the doom that is their due and he wished Bert Harris could send some of his surplus bombers to destroy them.'[44]

Beverley Nichols's book is much like Katherine Mayo's *Mother India*. Nichols was a great admirer of *Mother India*. He writes: 'Catherine [*sic*] Mayo of *Mother India* fame wrote at length about Indian hospitals but she might have changed some of her views if she had seen as much of them as I did, from the inside', and goes on to condemn Gandhi for having described *Mother India* as a 'Drain Inspector's Report'. In his opinion Miss Mayo eminently succeeded in depicting the hideous truth about India.

Nichols, in his foreword, notes his main objective in writing the book: 'It is an endeavour to trace the working of the Indian mind not only in politics, but *inter alia* in art, in literature, in music, in medicine, in journalism, in the cinema, and of course in religion.' Some of the chapter headings are as follows: The Elusive Indian, Searchlight on Hinduism, Pause for Breath, Hindu Hollywood, Mumbo-Jumbo, Hell Hindu, Hate Founds an Empire, White off White. Nichols further states in his foreword that 'the national press' was hounding him; it said 'he was on the pay of the government, was an envoy incognito', but 'I stayed on as an independent observer.' Incidentally he also enjoyed viceregal hospitality like Miss Katherine Mayo; first of Lord Linlithgow and later of Lord Wavell, 'with whom I had the honour of staying'. One might ask him what his credentials were that he was invited to be a guest of 'the representative of King–Emperor' in India, as Churchill called the Viceroy.

The first chapter, The Elusive Indian, deals with the questions, 'Have you ever met an Indian?' and 'What is Hinduism?' and reads: 'Hinduism has no Church. It has no Pope. It has no Bible. True it has a mass of ancient

texts, songs and legends... You can believe one and reject the other, as you choose.' Furthermore, and most important of all, it has 'no history' (p. 68). How could Hindus be civilized without the artefacts from which the great European or Western or British civilization had emerged.

The author moves on: 'Hinduism became perverse beyond all recognition; it borrowed here, there and everywhere, it accumulated to itself a mass of purely human superstition, deifying instinct, sanctifying convenience, and giving divine authority to human passion until it found itself saddled with several thousand "Gods", some of them of most disreputable character, of greed and "gods" of lust' (p. 77). About 120 years before the publication of Nichols's *magnum opus*, the missionaries of the Clapham sect had given similar attributes to Hindu gods, of greed and lust, but much scholarly British writing had emerged since then analysing with a great deal of clarity and appreciation the philosophical foundations as well as religious principles of Hindus in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Nichols's journey into the past did not sensitize his mind with any uplifting sentiment or thought on Hinduism. He was surprised to find that Hinduism was still flourishing: 'If Hinduism were a dying creed, we could afford to ignore its practical effects. But it is as full of savage life as the jungle from which it emanates' (p. 77). Then he asserts: 'Those of us who think that the most important thing that ever happened to the world was the birth of Christ, and believe that Christianity is not only true but wholly modern cannot very well be kept out of our discussion of modern problems' (p. 78). Finally he writes: 'This is the force that drives one fifth of the human race. It is therefore a fact of urgent and continuous significance to the world' (p. 79). Throughout the nineteenth century, the British administrators privately ventured to suggest that something ought to be done to civilize Indians through the teaching of Christianity. With the domination of the 'Gandhi bogey' this mission was thwarted in the twentieth century.

The author, displaying his erudition, writes how the Christian British abolished suttee, thugee, infanticide, enforced widowhood; etc. (p. 75). On the Ayurveda medicine, he invites attention to the main discovery of 'an ointment to infuse young men with horse-like vigour' (p. 141).

He describes 'Hindu' cinema: 'The village maiden was making sheep's eyes at a young man with swelling chest... If ever a girl was saying "come on" she was saying it...' Nichols asks: 'When is he going to kiss the girl?' His friend answers: 'They never do' (pp. 99–100). Why, no kissing! How uncivilized, the author seems to say.

Then, about 'Gandhi, the dictator, and the Fascist organization which he has created, called Congress, which obeys the slightest crack of his whip': 'For the Congress is the thing, 100 per cent, full blooded, uncompromising example of undiluted Fascism in the modern world...'; 'And Congress, of course, is a predominately Brahmin organization. One of the strangest paradoxes of modern history is that Congress should be the darling of the

warm-hearted Western Liberals, who would faint with horror if it were suggested that they were themselves tainted with Fascism' (p. 161).

Last but not least the author goes on to say: 'My own leader' is Mr Winston Churchill. I consider him to be a great enough man to be described as Churchill' (p. 165). He interviewed Jinnah whom he called 'the giant'. He did not care to meet Gandhi or any other leader of the Congress. His anti-Hindu bias probably did not allow him to do so.

This illuminating treatise on India was expected to form part of Lady Churchill's reading list, as recommended by her husband, Sir Winston Churchill, one of the greatest national war heroes of all time and twice Prime Minister of Great Britain. His influence during wartime politics was crucial and destroyed any chance of successful negotiations with Indians on constitutional issues. It is against this backdrop that the failure of Labour initiatives can be traced. The anti-Hindu bias and racist consciousness of the Tory leadership, combined with its inflexible resolve to continue British hegemony, triggered the forces leading to the partition of India. Jinnah's contribution to this heady mix through his battle cry for a separate Muslim homeland and his anti-Hindu tirades was no less significant. The mixture of religion and politics proved to be a deadly concoction producing traumatic effects in India.

The Indian political scenario

The Viceroy's interview with Jinnah on 4 September 1939 deserves scholarly attention. According to the Viceroy, Jinnah responded well to his request and 'the conversation was exceedingly friendly throughout'. The Viceroy felt that 'Jinnah had come with the object of offering me his party's support in return for the abandonment of Federation' and other concessions. Jinnah told Linlithgow, as recorded: 'Let His Majesty's Government at least protect them [Muslims who were 'suffering cruelly in the Congress Provinces'] in the enjoyment of their lives, their property and their own culture and mode of living.' Linlithgow said, 'Do you want me to turn Congress Ministries out?' To this Jinnah at once replied: 'Yes, turn them out at once. Nothing will bring them to their senses. *Their object though you may not believe it . . . is nothing less than to destroy you British and us Muslims*.'[45]

The Second World War had an important bearing on the Indian political situation. India was drawn into the vortex of international politics and war, against its will and consent. No one asked for its consent. India was a vassal subject country, an appendage of British power, an instrument, although a most valuable one and an aid to British imperial interests, and had to join the war as an essential part of the British empire. The war, to a great extent, transformed the nature of Indo-British relations. It certainly changed the course of events and the future history of India.

Had the war not occurred there was ample hope for and every possibility of continuation of the Congress-ruled governments in eight of the 11 provinces of British India; the journey towards independence would have been easier and smoother; there was every chance of a peaceful transfer of power in the foreseeable future. It is noteworthy that soon after the failure of the Simon Commission, Lord Irwin, then Viceroy, suggested that the British government should declare dominion status as the goal of Indian constitutional advance. Clement Attlee said that but for 'the obstructive opposition' of Winston Churchill and his friends, 'we might perhaps have got an all Indian solution of the Indian problem before the Second World War'.[46] The clash and eventual showdown between the imperial authority at the centre and the Indian National Congress would not have taken place on the issue of war aims and, as a concomitant of this, there would not have been an urgency on the part of the British government in India to seek support for its war aims from the Muslim League and Jinnah. The role and influence of Jinnah, in spite of his harangues against the 'Hindu Congress' and the Muslim League's outcry against the bogey of Hindu domination, would have been minimal, if not marginalized in Indian politics. The British were literally shaken when the Congress finally refused to cooperate in the war aims, and in their dire distress they sought Jinnah's support; he obligingly pledged the support of the Muslim League and 'Muslim India', as he termed it, for the war aims in India. From this time on the stars of Jinnah and the Muslim League were on the ascendant and Jinnah, basking under British patronage, refused to come to terms with the Congress for any constitutional advance.

Jinnah's stance against the Indian National Congress became more and more strident. He increased his demands each time they met; and made blistering attacks on the Congress and its leaders including Gandhi, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, using what Lord Zetland, the Secretary of State for India, was tempted to call 'the vocabulary of abusive epithets'.[47] In the process Hindu–Muslim relations were irreparably damaged and the cleavage between the two dominant communities of India widened. Yet it was doubtful whether Jinnah would have succeeded in his mission of galvanizing the Muslim community into a separate 'nation' without the help and countenance of the British government during the war period. Again it must be mentioned that Jinnah's influence in the Muslim-majority provinces of Sind, North Western Frontier Province, the Punjab, Bengal and Assam was minimal until 1942 or so. He was unable to secure the support of the five premiers of these provinces for his Pakistan demand. As long as these leaders, namely Khan Bahadur Allah Baksh of Sind, Dr Khan Saheb of NWFP, Sir Sikander Hyat Khan of the Punjab, Fazlul Haq of Bengal and Sir Mohammad Saadulla of Assam, were in power, Jinnah could not win over the Muslim communities of these provinces. The most prominent among the leaders

was Sir Sikander Hyat Khan: Jinnah asked Linlithgow to intercede to subdue Sikander.[48] Linlithgow recognized that the 'Sikander–Fazlul Haq element occupies a position of great strength', but he was prepared to help since 'even that section has the interest of Muslim unity to temporize with Jinnah and his friends in the Muslim minority provinces . . .'[49] Sir Sikander Hyat Khan died in December 1942, unfortunately for the Punjab and India. Allah Baksh was assassinated in May 1943, thus clearing the field in Sind for the supporters of Jinnah. Fazlul Haq was expelled by Jinnah from the Muslim League in 1943. Dr Khan Saheb continued to be premier until independence. Clement Attlee, Deputy Prime Minister in the War Cabinet of Winston Churchill, considered 'Sikander a much more responsible leader than Jinnah'.[50] It was his considered opinion that 'the Congress [was] the freedom party and the League candidates in the Punjab, Sind and NWFP will be defeated [in the 1946 election]. That would help preserve the unity of India.'[51]

While it is impossible to predict the course of events in history one could reasonably surmise that even the Conservative government of Great Britain might not have lent support to Jinnah's demand for Pakistan. Linlithgow, a Tory in his political outlook, was vice-chairman of the Conservative Party from 1924 to 1926 and had served in the Conservative government of 1922–24 as the Civil Lord of the Admiralty before his appointment as Viceroy in 1936. Although he supported Jinnah to the hilt during his viceroyalty, he was not prepared to offer Pakistan on a platter. In fact it would be quite correct to say that Jinnah and Linlithgow helped each other in times of need. Linlithgow cleverly bolstered up Jinnah's leadership to promote Hindu–Muslim dissension, so that the possibility of any rapprochement between the Congress and the Muslim League remained as remote as ever. The accepted hypothesis was that as long as the two dominant communities in India – Hindus and Muslims – disagreed, the prospect of continuation of the British Raj remained bright.

On the evening of 19 October 1943, at the dinner in honour of the incoming Viceroy, Linlithgow told Lord Wavell that there was no possibility of reaching an agreement between Gandhi and Jinnah. Wavell records in his journal: '[Linlithgow] believes we shall have to continue responsibility for India for at least another 30 years.'[52] In other words, Linlithgow did not anticipate either freedom for India or partition as late as October 1943. It is indeed astonishing that men in authority, like Linlithgow, did not notice the boiling rage sweeping across the country, illustrated by the 1942 Quit India Movement.

Durga Das, an eminent journalist of the time, records having met Linlithgow one week before his departure:

> With apparent sincerity, he expressed the belief that India could not hope to become free for another fifty years. This country, he

> declared blandly, was new to parliamentary institutions and would require a large leavening of British officials and Europeans to ensure their successful functioning. With the advent of air-conditioning, it was now possible for Britons to settle down in India permanently in areas like Dehra Dun, and when there were some six millions of them to buttress democratic administration, India might expect to make substantial progress towards self-government.[53]

It is truly fantastic to think of such a Tory panacea for India's political problem! Durga Das thus offers a unique example of the poverty of ideas and foresight about India in the highest echelons of the British ruling class. Linlithgow was a man of limited vision, abilities, intellect and education, and his belief in the nineteenth-century concept of the great imperial mission was quite inappropriate. Beyond doubt, all efforts at constitutional advance under the guidance of such a man were doomed to failure; yet Linlithgow remained Viceroy not only for his full term of five years but his tenure was extended thrice and he remained in office for seven and a half years during the most critical phase of India's struggle for freedom, thanks to Churchill.

Similarly, Winston Churchill, for whom India was 'a blind spot', was vague regarding the political future of India. Lord Wavell met Churchill on 29 March 1945, after sustained discussions at the India Committee and the India Office on 26–28 March 1945. He had sought their advice on his plan for a conference of Indian politicians to arrive at a settlement of constitutional issue. This culminated in the Simla Conference of 1945. Lord Wavell records what transpired at his meeting with the Prime Minister. After declaring that [Churchill] had no time to consider India,

> he then said you must have mercy on us, and proceeded to state all the problems they had to consider, and the reasons for delay in considering India, which they thought could be kept on ice. He mentioned the probability of an early General Election. I said quite firmly that India was very urgent and very important, that the problems would be just as difficult in all parts of the world at the end of the war as now, and that I could see no reason to postpone the issue. The P.M. then launched into a long jeremiad about India which lasted for about 40 minutes. He seems to favour partition into Pakistan, Hindustan, Princestan, etc., has very old-fashioned ideas about the problem and seems to see no ray of hope. He talked as if I was proposing to 'Quit India', change the constitution, and hand over India right away; and I had to interrupt him a number of times.[54]

Churchill had not only shunned any move towards a progressive realization of self-government in India; but, along with a few other

Conservatives, he went into 'violent and obstructive opposition' even against the Government of India Act 1935, which was piloted through the House of Commons with great skill by Sir Samuel Hoare (a member of the Conservative Party). So thought Clement Attlee, who observed further: 'Lord Halifax [Lord Irwin, the Viceroy] subsequently went on record that without this opposition by Sir Winston Churchill and his friends we might perhaps have got an All India solution to the Indian problem before the Second World War.'[55]

Again, in the words of Clement Attlee; 'When the Second War came India – unwisely I think – was brought into the war without any consultation with the leading Indian statesmen. And while the Indian armed forces for the most part and the masses in India were in full support of the Allies in the war against fascism, politicians stood aloof and their leaders were sent to prison.'[56] It is necessary to pay attention to this part of the story, in which Linlithgow, Lord Zetland and Winston Churchill had significant roles to play. Despite repeated warnings from Clement Attlee, who suggested both in the House of Commons and to Lord Zetland, whom he met personally to convince him that the Indian problem needed to be solved by statesmanship and 'imaginative insight', the Conservatives did not relent in their rigid attitude.

When the war began, the Linlithgow government was faced with a political dilemma. The Conservative government created considerable problems for Linlithgow, who could hardly go against Winston Churchill's directive and advice. The Congress Party was the largest party in India with a formidable presence in all parts of the country. Aside from the urban centres, where its power and influence had grown enormously over the years, even in the rural hinterland, it stamped the political landscape. In nine out of 11 provinces of British India, the Congress governments or Congress-supported governments ruled. It was therefore natural for the Congress to expect a certain degree of consideration on the part of the British government, should it need Congress support for its global undertakings. The British were no doubt aware that the much-needed supply of men and materials for the war would easily be forthcoming if Congress were on their side. India's vast resources would be theirs for the asking, if Congress was a willing partner in the war. Besides, the Indian National Congress, despite its past, was emerging as a political party steeped in the political culture of the British democratic experience, which meant it would be easier to do business in future with a government with a face and image reminiscent of the British. Thus, both political expediency and statesmanship demanded that the British government should have exerted itself to secure the support of the Congress in its hour of need.

The Linlithgow government was conscious of the fact that the Congress held the balance, but it was somewhat allergic to the radicals led

by Jawaharlal Nehru on the one hand and Subhas Chandra Bose on the other. Jawaharlal Nehru was no doubt sympathetic to the Allied cause against the forces of Nazism and fascism. Subhas Bose, on the other hand, advocated a policy of deriving as much benefit as possible from the British, declaring that 'their adversity is our opportunity'. But the political clout of Bose was not formidable enough to challenge the combined strength of Gandhi, who was for 'unconditional support' for the British, and Jawaharlal Nehru, whose first political instinct was to ally with the Allies in return for freedom and democracy for India after the war. Both Gandhi and Nehru were somewhat afraid of the extreme left-wing politics of Bose and were prepared to come to terms with the British.[57] However, Linlithgow's Conservative political philosophy looked to the right-wing Congress, with which he was in close touch at the beginning of the war through Rajendra Prasad, K.M. Munshi, B.G. Kher, C. Rajagopalachari and others, for support. He felt that there was some possibility of a split or rupture in the Congress ranks between the right and left wings; and he seems to have been waiting for such an eventuality, so that he could grasp the hands of the right-wing Congress for the war effort. It was folly on the part of the government to expect such an outcome.

Linlithgow was aware that the Congress

> are the largest party and most important in British India and are responsible for the government of nine provinces and we should make a very great mistake (both from our immediate point of view and from the point of view of possible misunderstandings by the outside world) if we did not do our utmost to turn to advantage such readiness as the Right Wing may show to work in with us. I regard the nuisance value of the Congress, if they turn against us, as very substantial and I believe, and the Commander-in-Chief agrees with me, that they have it in their power in that event largely to cripple our capacity to enlist our maximum strength in the war. It is in this connection and in the light of these considerations that it is in my judgement worthwhile taking some risk in seeking to secure the support of the Congress.[58]

Linlithgow went on further in his analysis of the situation. 'I am clear too that if the Congress Ministries resign, we must reckon upon their active opposition after a longer or shorter interval to all war measures accompanied by a rapid deterioration in the law and order position throughout India. I feel confident that in such circumstances I can rely upon the full support of the Cabinet and yourself in dealing with the resultant situation in the most resolute manner possible.'[59] Despite the formidable difficulties anticipated by the Linlithgow government, it did not make a sustained effort to win over the Congress for its war aims. Why not?

For one thing, most members of the British ruling class in India, including the Indian Civil Service, were Conservatives. Just a few years ago, in 1930–34, during the activities of the Civil Disobedience Movement, they had regarded the Congress as 'their enemy number one' and Gandhi was the most feared leader. How could they then stoop so low as to seek the hand of friendship of the Congress? Most of the members of the government still believed in the authority, power and prestige of the government. It was not a government based on consent or support of Indian public opinion; it could still ride roughshod over the Indian people, using force if necessary. Would the prestige of the government not fall in the eyes of the public, its subjects, if it now courted the erstwhile enemy, the Congress, for help? The Conservative government of Linlithgow sought the support of the Congress, in the most lukewarm manner, and on its own terms, not on the terms of the Congress, who wanted a declaration in unambiguous terms of the war aims.

Second, the government was prepared to utilize 'the communal division', the crescent card, to slam the doors of goodwill and support in the face of the Congress, as long as Jinnah and the Muslim League were prepared to support the government during the war. Linlithgow 'very strongly urged' the British government at home to respect the 'claims of the Muslims to be regarded as a separate cultural entity, entitled to a mouthpiece of its own in the Muslim League'.[60] In other words, Linlithgow pointed out that the Indian National Congress was not the only political party to be considered as important; there were others like the Muslim League and the princes, the latter, although not very vocal, were powerful in terms of wealth, influence and territorial possessions. The princes made substantial contributions to the war effort, and the Muslims formed the bulk of defence forces and the army fighting in other parts of the world defending British interests.[61] And finally there was the 'necessity' of 'safeguarding legitimate [interests] – European personnel and commercial interests is clearly again a factor to which great weight must be given and which is of real parliamentary significance'.[62] Hence, it was not only the Congress support which the government sought, but there were other important segments of its empire to which it turned for support in the war effort.

When the Congress ministries resigned as a protest against the government's inability to accept their demand for a declaration of war aims and the future form of government for India, Lord Zetland and others in the government at home were relieved. Zetland wrote to Linlithgow: 'Winston... was clearly a good deal elated by the apparent success of the substitution of the governors and their advisers for the Congress ministries...' Churchill also felt happy to find an excuse to run the government: 'since the elected representatives of the people declined to accept the responsibility, we had no option but to administer the country ourselves'.[63] In Cabinet meeting held in November 1939, Prime Minister Churchill was reported to have been

'extremely uncomfortable in the event of a clash between the governors and non-cooperating Congressmen' and, continuing 'the train of thought', he indicated 'to the effect that all that was necessary in order to avoid serious trouble was to grasp the nettle firmly and bring home to the masses the advantages of the beneficent British rule'.[64] Churchill, with the stout heart of a Tory, was bound to advise the government of India to deal with any opposition firmly; a euphemism for the use of force, and better still removing all unwanted opponents to prison, which is what Linlithgow did after some time in India.

The Conservatives' world-view – insensitive, arrogant, contemptuous of Indian public opinion, characteristic of a ruling race and class – was decidedly unresponsive to the needs of the subject country like India. The Indian National Congress was an outlawed party, its leaders and workers numbering more than 100,000 were behind bars and had been languishing in prisons since August 1942 as a consequence of the Quit India 'rebellion', as the British government termed the spontaneous movement of 1942. The unfortunate happenings of 1942 could have been avoided if the Conservative government of Churchill had, with some sympathy and political realism, accepted the broad parameters of the proposal offered by the Labour leaders during September–December 1939. The proposals were rejected outright, giving primacy to Jinnah and the Muslim League in the process.

The Labour initiatives

When the Second World War broke, the Labour Party was hopeful that the Congress ministries in power and the Indian people in general would help the British in their fight against Germany and its allies. Both Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru were opposed to fascism and Nazism in Europe and Japanese militarism in Asia because of their internal policies and aggression against other countries. Jawaharlal Nehru had shown where his sympathy lay. He had supported the cause of freedom in Czechoslovakia and the fight for civil rights in Spain. He played a key role in formulating the Congress foreign policy. He defined the policy as anti-imperialist on the one hand and anti-fascist on the other. He pointed out that it would be inconsistent to condemn fascism and Nazism and at the same time support imperialist domination. He also objected to the British 'holding the banner of democracy elsewhere and denying it to us in India'.[65] Jawaharlal Nehru wrote with conviction: 'Without that freedom the war would be like any old war, a contest between rival imperialisms and an attempt to defend and perpetuate the British Empire as such. It seemed absurd and impossible for us to line up in defence of that very imperialism against which we have been struggling for so long. And even a few of us, in view of larger considerations, considered that a lesser evil, it was utterly beyond our capacity to

carry our people. Only freedom could release mass energy and convert bitterness into enthusiasm for a cause. There was no other way.'[66]

The Labour leaders were in sympathy with the Indian aspirations, unlike the Conservatives. Way back in the summer of 1938, when Jawaharlal Nehru was in England, he was in close touch with the Labour leaders. In fact, some of them – including Attlee, Stafford Gripps, Aneurin Bevan, Richard Crossman, Leonard Barnes and Harold Laski – met Nehru and Krishna Menon during a weekend at Filkins; they discussed some of the modalities of the transfer of power to India in the event of the Labour Party coming to power.[67]

Some of the important clauses of the Cripps proposals were the recognition of the goal of dominion status with complete self-government for India; a new constitution to be framed through an elected Constituent Assembly, members of which were to be elected on an adult franchise with the provision of a separate electorate for minorities; protection of minorities through safeguards; a treaty of paramountcy to be the basis of treaties with the princes. The proposals further stated: 'The British propose to stipulate that the treaty between India and Great Britain shall contain certain temporary safeguards for the minorities, limited to the period of transition, similar in form to those which appear in a number of existing European treaties between sovereign states, etc. The form of safeguards will be a matter for negotiations, the main tenor of the stipulated terms is dealt with in more details hereafter.'[68] Cripps asked Zetland to examine his proposals. Zetland pointed out rather sarcastically to Linlithgow that Cripps 'had developed his ideas further' and had offered a 'full blown scheme for solving the Indian problem' and, on the lines as suggested by him, 'he was proposing to appeal to the Congress'.[69] According to the proposed scheme, Cripps suggested a Constituent Assembly to frame the new constitution; if differences persisted among the parties, a 15 years' transitional period would be fixed to resolve them. On the question of defence, a treaty between India and Britain would be signed; similar treaty engagements were suggested for safeguarding the rights of minorities and trade relations with Britain. Zetland did not comment on the proposals and informed Lord Linlithgow: 'If India was indeed to acquire Dominion Status by means of a treaty, I have not yet, however, said anything on these lines to the Cabinet.'[70] Nor had he any intention of giving a serious consideration to Labour initiatives, highly significant though they were in the context of the Indian political situation.

Before the Cripps proposals had been articulated, and produced ripples in Zetland's mind, feverish activity was witnessed inside and outside Parliament, mainly owing to Clement Attlee's advocacy of resolving the Indian problem with a certain measure of sympathetic understanding and political insight. Attlee stressed in the House of Commons debate: 'What is required to solve the Indian problems is imaginative insight.' Zetland was

struck with what he termed 'the dominant single phrase' of Attlee, that of 'imaginative insight': 'What he [Attlee] meant by it quite obviously was that we should make the declaration demanded by Nehru. He also raised with me the question of propaganda in India.'[71] Attlee advised Zetland to come to terms with the Congress and leave the question of propaganda to it: once the Congress was accepted by the British government as a willing and equal partner its help in the prosecution of war could be forthcoming without any reservation. This was in fact true. The Congress would have agreed to support Britain, if the basic issue of war aims had been settled, declaring that the future of India lay in dominion status with complete self-government after the end of war. This was the solution to even the most difficult problem in India at that time. Even Linlithgow agreed, despite his die-hard opposition to the declaration of war aims, that 'the most common demand is for an assurance that Dominion Status will be granted at the end of the war, or that Indian politicians shall be associated with the conduct of the war'.[72] Indian public opinion was overwhelmingly for such a move. But neither Zetland nor Linlithgow felt inclined to resolve the issue in this manner. Had they shown a bit of foresight, the Congress would have agreed to join the British war effort. The press also stressed 'the necessity of some adjustment, if only for wartime purposes'.[73] Attlee and the other party leaders would have felt satisfied with such an assurance even though it fell short of their own proposals.

Zetland was stirred up by Attlee's views. The divergence of opinions between them arose out of their different ideologies, as reflected in the world-views of the Conservative and Labour parties. In the context of the Indian situation, the Congress stand was quite similar to that of the Labour Party, both in terms of the philosophical foundations and in terms of strategies to resolve internal and international issues. The Conservative approach was still somewhat conditioned by the notions of 'the imperial mission' in relation to the subject peoples of the British empire. The Labour Party, without rushing to dismantle the empire, even though it favoured the process of decolonization, postulated that the principles of freedom, equality, justice and democracy should be applied to India, despite it heritage of social and religious plurality. Like the Indian National Congress, the Labour Party sought to maintain the unity of India rather than support divisive elements represented by social and class cleavages and religious antagonism. The Labour Party visualized an end of the empire sooner than later, in contrast to the Conservatives, who hoped to prolong British rule by whatever means possible.

Zetland was therefore visibly upset when Attlee suggested that the government should work 'through the Congress, secure their whole-hearted cooperation and you will find that they [the Congress] will do all the propaganda work that you require!'[74] Zetland further pointed out that in the letter pages of the *Manchester Guardian* 'the correspondence are

open to all those who are under the spell of the Congress. They have been filled, I need hardly say, by letters from Agatha Harrison's Conciliation Group and many others.' Zetland characterized these as 'violent and irresponsible campaigning . . . Nevertheless I can't hide from myself the fact that my silence has necessarily resulted in the field being left open in great measure to the opposition and the whole army of cranks, faddists, visionaries and doctrinaires. However, we have done what we could, particularly in the way of stimulating newspaper editors to put a more realistic view of the problem before their readers, and since the *Times* leading articles, which you will have seen, the editors of some other papers have followed suit.'[75]

Linlithgow's government in India was rather contemptuous of the overwhelming response of the Indian press to the Congress demand for the declaration of war aims. However, the War Cabinet was obviously worried about British public opinion. The impact of Attlee's stand and lead articles in the *Manchester Guardian* was great in India. Attlee's observations and viewpoints had made waves in the media. Linlithgow mentioned some kind of 'turmoil', and asked Zetland to do something to stem the tide. Zetland responded by stating that the Congress and the Labour Party were in hand and glove with each other, resulting in the stiffening of the attitude of the Congress. He also informed Linlithgow that Cripps had written to Nehru 'to stand firm and not to recede by an inch from the point which he has taken up'. He said: 'This is all very naughty and mischievous and I hope that the air may be clear to some extent by the debate in the House of Commons this afternoon.'[76]

Attlee's advice to the Conservative government to seek Congress support and his statement in the House of Commons that India should be welcomed as a willing and equal partner in the war 'on a level with us and not in any kind of dependency whatever'[77] upset the orthodoxy in Great Britain and India. Linlithgow was nervous and implored Zetland to intercede and ask Attlee and Morrison not to press further, especially at a time when he was in dialogue with Indian leaders including Gandhi and Jinnah. He impressed upon the government at home that he was working towards a formula with the Indians, and that no steps should be taken to upset his position. He informed Zetland in no uncertain terms, 'I am not much moved by the demand for declaration of aims' and there was 'no foundation for the Congress suggestion that we were fighting the war to safeguard democracy, a phrase on which Nehru had built his argument'.[78]

Armed with Linlithgow's opinions and concerned as he himself was about the explosive nature of discussions which were being carried out at the parliamentary level in Britain and at all levels in India, especially in the media, Zetland argued with Attlee that the Congress, although very important, was not the only party in India: 'I reminded him of the strength of the Muslim objection to the possibility of the Hindu Raj . . . Nothing, I said however, appeared to have any effect on Attlee.'[79]

Yet Attlee kept up the pressure on the government for a conciliation with the Congress, which could have been facilitated with the declaration of war aims. A deputation of the opposition, comprising leaders of the Liberal and Labour parties led by Attlee, met Zetland on 5 October 1939 and laid special stress on two points. First, the declaration of war aims should be made on behalf of His Majesty's government 'to meet Congress claims to be willing partner in the prosecution of war' and, second, 'such a declaration should in any case be made before the Congress fully determines the course of action'.[80]

In the face of such pressure, Zetland was bound to find an escape route. He told the deputation that the Viceroy was in the midst of an exchange of views with important Indian leaders and that it was on the agenda to call an All Parties Conference to arrive at a solution to India's problems. It was clear that Zetland and Linlithgow were determined to sabotage any Labour move for conciliation with the Congress. The All Parties Conference was unwanted by all except Jinnah. Gandhi asked Linlithgow not to convene the All Parties Conference. Jawaharlal Nehru had similarly opposed the move, declaring that certain elements would raise intractable issues at a critical juncture culminating in bitterness and further estrangement. Instead of finding a solution this process was bound to destroy any modicum of harmony and goodwill among the different bodies. Linlithgow was absolutely sure that the All Parties Conference would 'reveal the impossibility of agreement on a common policy between the parties concerned', and that Muslims and princes 'would resist any scheme which would hand over defence at the centre to the majority community'. Linlithgow had ensured that his 'friends', the Muslims and princes, would cooperate on any matter concerning constitutional advance: 'I see the hostility of the parties to any internal democratisation and to any advance of all-India character likely to affect their own position.' He believed that, in the Punjab, it was vitally necessary for defence 'to safeguard the position of the Muslims in regard to recruitment'. Furthermore, 'the discussion would have brought out publicly…the real and fundamental obstacles, not of our making, to any all-India advance of the type demanded by the Congress as the price of cooperation'.[81]

The demand for a declaration of war aims was by no means irrational. An overwhelming body of public opinion in the country, besides the Congress, was in favour of a declaration of aims. If the Conservative Party had so wished, a solution to the Congress demand could have been found, especially since the entire opposition comprising the Labour and the Liberal parties in Parliament supported the demand for such a declaration, if for no other reason than to secure the willing cooperation of the Indian National Congress. After all, Congress was the largest and at the same time the most important political party of India. Jawaharlal Nehru, the Congress spokesman, had asked for a clear definition of war aims; whether

the British were fighting for 'freedom' and 'democracy' or whether the war was 'an imperialist war' like the 'old wars' fought between the 'imperialist powers' or rivals. He asked the government to state its position in 'clear-cut' and 'unambiguous language'. The demand of the Congress was neither an overbearing nor irresponsible demand. Even Lord Linlithgow recognized the rationality and validity of the demand and he said so to Lord Zetland: 'The understandable feeling that if this war is a war of freedom, Indians in support of it can legitimately and logically ask for an assurance about their future. The last consideration carries the most influence.'[82] This was the crux of the issue and the Conservatives could not escape the fact that India's right to demand something concrete for future constitutional advance was legitimate. Lord Linlithgow, in his first broadcast to India after the outbreak of war, said that it was 'freedom' of the world which was at stake. Winston Churchill, in a speech at Horse Guards Parade on 20 May 1940, declared that they were fighting for 'the cause of freedom'.[83]

Clement Attlee, the leader of the opposition in the House of Commons, declared, while addressing members of Parliament on 3 October 1939: 'It is very vital in this struggle that we must make clear by deeds as well as by words that we are standing for democracy and not for imperialism. We have to consider that fact in dealing with all those people who are standing with us in this war.'[84] When the war began, Gandhi had offered 'unconditional support' for the war effort. The Indian National Congress leadership, except for a few left-wing leaders like Subhas Chandra Bose, was in favour of supporting Britain in its hour of trial. Nehru had publicly declared that fascism was a common danger and India ought to support the war effort as much as possible. Why did the government not take the Indian people and the Congress into its confidence before making the unilateral declaration, as the Viceroy did on 3 September 1939, that India was a belligerent country and was at war with Germany? Was it a deliberate attempt on the part of the British government in India to ignore or humiliate the popularly elected provincial governments and the leading political parties like the Indian National Congress? By doing so, the government itself raised the issue of whether or not India was a subject country and, if so, why should the British government feel obliged to ask for India's consent for the prosecution of war. It must be stressed that the British government had asked for support from the dominion governments of South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland and Canada. They had obviously differentiated between the free dominion members of the British Commonwealth of Nations and India. The Congress described it as a national affront. Clement Attlee said that the government 'unwisely'[85] did not seek India's consent first and showed a 'lack of imaginative insight in dealing with the Indian people'. The Congress demand for a declaration of war aims before utilizing the resources of India for the war was not an isolated demand. Outside the British Parliament there was a wide

discussion among the British intelligentsia and the press regarding the necessity of such a declaration. They 'expressed dissatisfaction with the vague statements of their rulers on the purposes of war'. When Julian Huxley spoke of 'fighting for the future order of Europe, and the continuation of Western civilization', the master of Balliol College, Dr Lindsay, said the issues of the war were 'primarily not national nor imperial but of a world order'. H.G. Wells asked for a precise statement of war aims and recalled how 'the Great War came to a ragged end in mutual accusations of broken promises and double crossing'. Professor A.B. Keith spoke of the 'urgent necessity for the definite formulation by Britain of precise war aims'. The Congress demand, therefore, was not a lonely cry in the wilderness.[86] The Conservatives failed their own people, and the Indians, in this regard.

In the debate of 3 October 1939 in the House of Commons, Attlee continued: 'In this connection I would refer to the great country of India. The Indian people are with us in our fight for democracy but they wish to come not as dependants but as free and equal partners. I do not think the Indian people have been handled tactfully in this matter.'[87] The Congress position was vindicated by Attlee's address as well as by the British intelligentsia. Jawaharlal Nehru's demand was therefore based on the realities of the international situation and was neither far-fetched, nor 'doctrinaire' as it was made out to be.[88] Nehru had said in a message to the London *News Chronicle* that it was essential to declare the war aims 'to make the people of India enthusiastic for a war which is not theirs'. Attlee's advocacy of India's cause in the House of Commons was of great significance. It made waves in India. Attlee had followed the government action *vis-à-vis* Indian political parties closely. The lack of response to the Congress viewpoints which sharpened the rivalries between the two dominant political parties worried the Labour Party. Attlee pointed out that the party

> which today controls the government of a great majority of Indian provinces, should have been brought into closest consultation with the government at the start. The government must try to show a more imaginative insight in dealing with the Indian people. The declaration of the Congress shows where the sympathy of the Indian people lies, and they want to do their share as equals . . . I thought more might have been said by the Secretary of State for India in another place the other day; I hope we shall get a statement in this House and I hope it will be one such as will show the Indian people that in this matter they are coming in on a level with us.[89]

These statements, coming from the leader of the opposition in the British Parliament, deeply upset the Conservatives. Zetland, then Secretary of State for India, and Linlithgow, the Viceroy, in complete cooperation with each

other, started to counteract Labour initiatives. It was most unfortunate that they did not agree with the advice of the opposition leaders to come to terms with the Congress. In retrospect, it appears, a reconciliation with the Congress was out of question, in spite of the Labour Party's strong espousal of the Congress case. In the Neville Chamberlain ministry, Winston Churchill was still an important factor in respect of India. He reacted with a certain degree of hostility to the Labour proposals, feeling that the Congress and the Labour Party seemed to be working as close allies. Besides, there was a sharp divide between the Labour Party and the Conservatives on most issues, both domestic and international. Their agreement to work together was the product of the wartime situation.

Winston Churchill's contempt for 'the handful of voluble and disloyal politicians who have constituted the so-called Indian Congress'[90] continued to befog his mind. Lord Linlithgow's opinion of the Congress and its leaders was not very different. He could converse for hours with Gandhi without reaching any agreement. The process of interviews continued unabated for days and months; this helped to further block progress. Jawaharlal Nehru was, in Linlithgow's view, a leftist unworthy of his attention. In fact, he never met Nehru during the next four years as Viceroy, although Nehru was the most important and articulate leader of the Congress after Gandhi. He was more comfortable with 'the Right-Wing' leaders of the Congress, such as Rajagopalachari, K.M. Munshi, B.G. Kher or Rajendra Prasad whom he met several times; he hoped they would not support Nehru's views and actions. In fact, he hoped there would be a split in the Congress. But that never happened, to his dismay. About Jawaharlal Nehru he said categorically: 'I shall be surprised in the light of my appreciation of Nehru's nature and his consistent writing [whether] meeting will be of great value.'[91]

Linlithgow was considered to be a very 'poor negotiator', a man who seldom 'opened his mind', who was incapable of providing options for working out a solution to any problem. It was often said about him that, besides being self-willed and inflexible, he was unsympathetic to the aspirations of the Indians as a whole. He met a large section of people, during September–December 1939, when he could have brought about a workable consensus of Indian people, if he had wished to do so. Even the Congress would have been willing partners in the wartime politics, if only the declaration of war aims had been issued by Lord Linlithgow to its satisfaction. But he was influenced by the government at home too, although his prestige as a man on the spot was high and he could approach Winston Churchill through direct contact. Was it because of his mindset that he refused to come to terms with the Congress or was he convinced that even without the Congress support he could continue to receive support from the princes, Muslims and other sections of the Indian community for the war aims? In fact, he seemed to be of the opinion that it

would be better if the Congress ministries resigned, although they were most reluctant to do so, not only because of the loss of power and prestige involved but also because of their intrinsic resolve to carry out the mandate of the people received during the election. It was the Viceroy's lack of a positive response to the Congress demands, most of which were not unreasonable as discussed earlier, that the ministers resigned.

On the issue of war aims defined as 'freedom' and 'democracy', Linlithgow went out of the way to say, without much conviction of course; 'I see no reason why we should let ourselves become entangled about the merits and demerits of the principle of democracy, or the possible reactions on the position of India, or on the colonies, to which I see also Nehru has referred to our views on this abstract question.'[92] Linlithgow's ingenuity in asserting that neither Great Britain nor the government of India had ever claimed to have been fighting for democracy seems intellectually sterile and counterproductive. They had all invoked the concept of freedom as the guiding star of their protective armour against the Nazi aggression. What does freedom constitute? Does freedom imply only sovereignty of the state in international law? Can there be freedom in dictatorship of any kind? Can there be freedom in a despotic or a totalitarian state? What does freedom imply for subject peoples like Indians, who were under an imperialist power determined to maintain its political, cultural, economic and racial hegemony? Freedom, over the years, has also been defined as the freedom from want, freedom from fear, freedom of faith and freedom of expression. Are these not the basic ingredients of a democratic civil society? These freedoms constituted the essential elements of democracy. Again, reverting to Attlee's speech of 3 October 1939: 'I say it is an outstanding instance of the need for telling the whole world what this country stands for. The Government have shown a lack of imagination and initiative in not rallying sufficiently behind them all those forces in the world which are really with them but which need just a touch of inspiration.'[93] The Indian National Congress wanted precisely such an approach from the government to enable it to support the British fully and without reservation. It also expected, as pointed out by Congress spokesman Jawaharlal Nehru, that Indians should be recipients of those benefits which stem from freedom and a democratic form of life and governance and which should be declared by the government as the future goal of the present relationship, and which might be attained after the end of the war.

Linlithgow, however, was not prepared to say what was obvious to everyone. He argued rather shamefacedly: 'We have completely avoided any suggestion that we are at war to further or defend democracy. Indeed it would be a little difficult to regard Poland, with its totalitarian record and the attitude it has on occasion adopted towards its monarchies and towards the League, as an ideal example of modern democracy.'[94] Lord Linlithgow's opposition to defining war aims for the Indians emanated from the hidden

agenda and his belief that British rule could be prolonged by the alliance which he was hopeful of forging with Jinnah's Muslim League and the 'be-jewelled aristocracy', the princes. He was also a staunch opponent of granting full self-government or dominion status to India, as was Winston Churchill. He resisted all moves on the part of the Congress to pin him down on the this vital question. He went on to inform Gandhi during the interview on 26 September 1939 'that it was not a question of fighting for democracy, a suggestion which I have seen in various places, to which I do not think His Majesty's Government have ever committed themselves in the least degree. It would be realised at once, that the formulation by His Majesty's Government of such an objective would mean that we were concerned to force a particular form of government on other people, which was the very last thing which we wanted to.'[95]

Jawaharlal Nehru had also raised the question of India's participation and representation at the peace conference after the war and had suggested outlining the peace aims. Linlithgow anticipated that these questions might be asked by Nehru in his meeting with the Viceroy scheduled for 3 October 1939. Linlithgow informed Zetland that he would not enter into any discussion on these matters with Nehru, saying it was 'premature to start considering [them] at this stage'. And, if the representation was to be 'political' in character, he would 'take into account Muslims as well as Congress'.[96] It is instructive to note that the matters relating to peace did come up in the House of Commons. They were not considered 'premature' over there. Attlee, speaking on the subject on 28 November 1939, said that the aims of peace must consist of 'not the least important – the abandonment of imperialism, the extension of freedom all over the world and equal access to all nations and all peoples of the good things of the world. We believe that these things are vital to the establishment of a new world order.'[97] Furthermore, drawing attention to Neville Chamberlain's statement that 'he wants unfettered rights for nations to choose their own form of government', Attlee said, 'Yes, but is that to apply to Europe alone? Should we apply that to India, Africa and our colonial Empire? If we are to lay down principles for a new world order, we must be prepared to apply them to ourselves as well as to ask others to accept them.'[98]

Thus the issues of peace aims as well as war aims were as important and vital to the people of Great Britain as to the Indians and the Congress. Unfortunately, the inflexible and somewhat crude and grossly oversimplified attitude of Linlithgow meant that these matters were not treated with the seriousness they deserved. The myth that it was a Congress failure to appreciate the critical situation and participate in war aims with the government persists, however.

Within a week of the exposition of his views on India before the House of Commons, Attlee, along with Arthur Greenwood, deputy leader of the

Labour Party, met Lord Zetland to express their concern over 'the most disquieting political situation in India' and ask him to invite the political leaders of India to be associated with the central government. Zetland's answer was that political leaders were to be invited and that there was 'wide divergence of views among the Indians themselves'; but of course, he said, 'we have every sympathy with the natural desire of Indian leaders to be taken into consultation on the conduct of the war'.[99] Zetland thus rejected the idea of including the leaders of political parties in the central government. With equal ease he avoided being drawn into the argument put forward by Attlee regarding the formation of a new Central Legislative Assembly elected on a 'provincial franchise' in line with the proposals of Stafford Cripps.[100] Similarly, an attempt on the part of Carl Heath of Agatha Harrison's Conciliation Group to impress on Zetland that it was essential to prevent 'what he described as an unfortunate and unnecessary break developing into a disastrous chasm' between the Indian National Congress and the government failed to move him. Zetland informed Linlithgow that Carl Heath had 'noticed that we attributed the failure of efforts to go further to meet the Congress in the main to Hindu–Muslim antagonism'.

It was clear that the Linlithgow government would not come forward with the declaration of war aims. After a prolonged deliberation from 8 to 15 September on the war crisis, the Congress working committee issued a statement. Taking exception to the fact that 'the British Government in India . . . declared India as a belligerent country . . . without the consent of the Indian people', and had 'promulgated ordinances, passed the Government of India Act Amending Bill, and taken other far-reaching measures which affect the Indian people vitally and circumscribe and limit the powers and activities of the provincial governments', the statement pointed out that 'the issue of war and peace for India must be decided by the Indian people and no outside authority can impose this decision upon them, nor can the Indian people permit their resources to be exploited for imperialist ends'.[101] The statement further observed: 'The Congress has repeatedly declared its entire disapproval of the ideology and practice of Fascism and Nazism and their glorification of war and violence and suppression of the human spirit. It has condemned the aggression in which they have repeatedly indulged and their sweeping away of well-established principles recognized standard of civilized behaviour.'[102] The Congress statement went on: 'The Committee are aware that the Governments of Great Britain and France have declared that they are fighting for democracy and freedom and to put an end to aggression . . . If the war is to defend the status-quo, imperialist possessions, colonies and vested interests and privilege, then India can have nothing to do with it. If, however, the issue is democracy and a world order based on democracy, then India is intensely interested in it.'[103] The Indian National Congress through this statement asked the government of India to declare its war

aims in clear and unambiguous language. It reiterated these basic principles again in the All India Congress committee meeting held on 10 October 1939, adding: 'The Congress has been guided throughout by its objective of achieving the independence of the Indian people and the establishment of a free democratic state in India wherein the rights and interests of all minorities are preserved and safe-guarded . . .'[104]

The Congress resolution of 10 October 1939, in addition to other demands, highlighted the Congress objective of complete independence. This seems to have been prompted by the failure of the meeting with the Viceroy held on 3 October 1939, wherein Dr Rajendra Prasad, the Congress President, and Jawaharlal Nehru were present. The meeting lasted for two and half hours and the Viceroy recorded 'no advance' in his negotiations. Nehru asked for a declaration, 'full-blooded, positive and unambiguous'. He used the phrase 'absolute freedom' for India after the war and 'unfettered liberty to frame her constitution by means of a Constituent Assembly'. Nehru also demanded an immediate share of power at the centre but was not clear as to the precise nature of the machinery involved. Linlithgow remarked that neither Prasad nor Nehru 'displayed the least anxiety to face up to the complaints at their proposals in terms of reactions on Muslims, Princes, etc.'. It was interesting to see', the Viceroy added, 'they were profoundly disturbed by the possibility of an All Parties Conference'.[105]

Having received resolutions, manifestos and statements from different political bodies such as the Congress, the All India Muslim League, the National Liberal Federation, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Depressed Classes Federation, the Democratic Swarajya Party, the Forward Bloc, in respect of their attitudes to the war, and having met a large cross-section of leaders from all walks of life, including from the major political parties, the Viceroy issued his declaration on 17 October 1939. On the question of a declaration of war aims, the Viceroy was armed with the view of the Cabinet, which, 'in your own words were not enthusiastic about it although they do not wish to withhold their assent'.[106] Linlithgow pointed out to Zetland: 'My own conclusion is that whether there is a break with the Congress or not, a declaration will be desirable. Public opinion here now is quite clearly . . . worked up to a pitch of expectation of a declaration of some sort as regards the constitutional position and our aims in the war.'[107]

Considering the trend of talks between the Viceroy and the Congress and others, the Congress had no illusion, whatsoever, about the ultimate result and knew that a breakdown of relations with the government was most likely, although that was not what it desired. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel had said that the Viceroy's exposition of 'difficulties faced by him in resolving the problem of war aims; the emphasis laid by the Viceroy in interviewing a large number of non-Congress leaders and the comments in *The Times* and other British newspapers' indicated that the Linlithgow

government was determined to scuttle the Congress demand. Linlithgow seemed to chuckle when he said: 'From another source in close touch with my Ministers I learn that they are very jumpy, are desperately keen to stay in office and longing for a *via media*.'[108] The Viceroy saw to it that no *via media* was provided: he wanted the Congress governments thrown out as early as possible, the earlier the better, as he observed.[109] B.G. Kher also informed the Viceroy that 'at Wardha there was a general feeling mainly due to *The Times* comments that we did not feel interested to meet Congress'.[110]

Against such a sombre atmosphere the Viceroy issued, what he called, 'some sort' of a declaration. It was first vetted and approved by the Cabinet and the text of the statement 'as agreed between us' was issued on 17 September 1939 in New Delhi.[111]

The statement is a unique document in respect of its polemics, vagueness and refusal to pronounce what had been agreed. On 'the question of India's future and of the lines of her constitutional development', it referred to the preamble of the Government of India Act 1919, as well as to Lord Irwin's statement of 1929 about dominion status, and finally the Government of India Act 1935 which provided for autonomy in the provinces and at the centre, federation being 'the goal of Indian unity'.[112] The statement referred to dominion status but did not make it clear that this would be the future goal of Indian constitutional advance. The Viceroy's statement said: 'They are clear, and positive. They are enshrined in the Parliamentary record. They stand as the definite and categorical exposition of the policy of His Majesty's Government today, and of their intentions today in this end, the future constitutional development and position of India.'[113] Yet the government did not state that India would attain dominion status after the war. It is wrong to say that India was offered dominion status. R.J. Moore is wrong in maintaining this position.[114] The governing clause, as stated by the Viceroy, says: 'I would add only that His Majesty the King Emperor in May 1937 lays upon me as Governor General a direction so as to exercise the trust which His Majesty has reposed in me the partnership between India and the United Kingdom without our Empire may be furthered to the end that India may attain its due place among our Dominions.'[115] In other words, the Viceroy had the power 'reposed in him as the King Emperor's representative' and an option to consider when the offer of dominion status would actually be made. The statement further clarifies: 'And I am authorised now by His Majesty's Government to say that at the end of the war they will be very willing to enter into consultation with representatives of several communities, parties, and interests of India, and with Indian Princes, with a view to securing their cooperation in the framing of such modifications as may seem desirable.' In this connection, it referred to the Government of India Act: 'Let me go on to say another word about the Act of 1935. That Act was based on the greatest measure of

common agreement which it was possible to obtain at that time, when it was framed.'[116]

If already the 'greatest measure of common agreement' had been reached then why was it necessary again 'to enter into consultation with the representatives of communities, parties, princes and other interests, meaning thereby European commercial interests and such like? The fact is that neither the British government of the time nor the government of India had any intention of offering the principle of dominion status to India until it was discussed afresh. Lord Zetland, the Secretary of State for India, within a week of the declaration of the Viceroy, blandly pointed out: 'I told the Cabinet plainly that while we had supposed that the journey towards Dominion Status would be a long one, the effect of the outbreak of the war had been to bring us hard up against the implications of Dominion Status for India and I told them they must make up their minds how far they were now prepared to go to implement the promise contained in our earlier pledges. I pointed out that we were on the horns of a painful dilemma.'[117] Only a little while ago, the Viceroy had informed Zetland: 'Nothing could be more foolish, I suspect, on our part as a nation than to start at this point to commit ourselves to a series of objectives which may at any point appear to be reasonable and easily attainable but which might as the war goes on call for very substantial revision.'[118] The government had refused to honour not only the pledges but actually the law which had been passed by Parliament in 1935.

On 11 February 1935, Winston Churchill had warned during the second reading of the India Bill that 'to give self government at the centre would give the Indians the powers to whittle away all trading safeguards, and to hold Lancashire as hostages, and would enable a small group of politically motivated men to trample on the rights of millions of inarticulate and ill-represented minorities'.[119] Furthermore, he declared that he wanted to establish the idea 'that we are there [in India] for ever' as 'honoured partners with out Indian fellow-subjects'. Such talk proved to be his last-ditch battle against Indian reforms introduced by the Government of India Act 1935. During this historic second reading a Labour amendment urging dominion status for India was passed by 404 to 133, despite Churchill's opposition and 84 Conservative members voting against. The point was that the dominion status idea was passed by an overwhelming majority in the House of Commons, yet this did not form part of the Act. Linlithgow's opposition to the grant of dominion status was in line with the approach of Churchill, who was the First Lord of Admiralty in the Chamberlain ministry in 1939–40. Later, on 12 July 1940, when Amery's India proposal regarding the dominion status of India came up for discussion before the Cabinet, Churchill argued that it would now be considered 'a sham' and the Indians would no longer be interested in it.[120] To an extent Churchill was right, but his motivation was simply to avoid any

further discussion on the subject. The Cabinet even at that stage hesitated to declare that dominion status was its final goal. Lord Zetland observed that 'so far as India is concerned all our pledges related either explicitly or implicitly to the future development of India within the Empire'. The right to secede 'involves confusion of thought', he said.[121] Amery noted Lord Halifax's view that 'he finds' 'Winston Churchill' terribly exalted about India and 'impossible to reason with'.[122] Under the circumstances, the Congress demand was pitched at complete independence and the dominion status idea, which might have been accepted by all, including the Congress, at the beginning of the war, was no longer a coveted proposition.

Within two months of the war starting, mostly owing to the Linlithgow government's indiscretion – or was it a deliberate policy – the Labour initiatives had come to nothing. Gandhi wrote in his *Harijan* on 2 December 1939 that dominion status meant 'a Commonwealth of whites, who are themselves pillars of imperialism engaged in exploiting the non-European races who they regard as uncivilized'. Gandhi further maintained that if 'Dominion Status is less than Independence India cannot be satisfied with less'. Lord Linlithgow informed the Secretary of State for India that the Congress attitude had greatly stiffened, and referred to a speech by Jawaharlal Nehru delivered on 2 December 1939: 'We are always ready to negotiate and enter into a settlement with the British Government. We cannot return to the old condition. We have placed our cards on the table. No useful purpose can be served by interviews, talks or statements unless Government are prepared to accept the demands of the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi. We can never accept anything less than independence. We are determined to sever our relations with British Imperialism, and we will not cooperate with it except on our condition.'[123]

The issue of the Constituent Assembly formation was rejected by the Linlithgow government: it involved discussions with other parties, and 'the discussion would have brought out publicly . . . if I am not mistaken, the real and fundamental obstacles, not of our making, to any all India advance of the type demanded by the Congress as the price of cooperation'.[124] For one thing the Congress had already moved ahead as far as its major demand was concerned.

In respect of the demand for a share of power at the centre, Linlithgow explained to Zetland that 'the type of *face-saving concern*, which I have in view',[125] (emphasis added) related to the formation of a Defence Liaison Committee consisting of members 'from both inside and outside the Legislature' and containing 'representatives of the Princes to indicate that I contemplated myself calling periodically meeting[s] throughout the war, over which I shall myself preside to give confidential information as to the general position'. He assured Zetland that 'such meetings would be in no sense executive in character, and would be purely for the purpose of exchange of information, discussion of possible difficulties'.[126] This was

probably going to be the nucleus of the Consultative Committee they had in mind. Zetland, in confidence, asked Linlithgow to ensure that the Congress should not have a majority in it: 'The Cabinet asked me to put their doubts to you and to let them have a more concrete picture of the composition and functions of the committee before they come to a decision.'[127] The so-called Consultative Committee was later formed. Congress did not show much interest in 'the face-saving' device as planned and devised by Linlithgow.

Thus, the story of reconciliation with the Congress came to end within a couple of months of the start of the war. By November 1939, most of the Congress ministries, after passing the 'War resolution', as it was termed, in the provincial legislatures, had resigned. Linlithgow promptly promulgated section 93, suspending the legislatures instead of dissolving them, and the governments of the Congress-ruled states were taken over by the respective governors. Some of the well-wishers of the Congress continued their efforts to enlighten the Conservative government at home. One such person was Edward Thompson who returned to England after a visit to India, during which he had met a large number of political leaders, both Indian and European. He informed Zetland 'that a settlement with Congress is by no means impossible' even at that late stage and that 'we must not attach undue importance to the present insistence upon a Constituent Assembly'. Zetland observed that Edward Thompson 'made light of the Hindu–Muslim controversy and said that was largely manufactured by Jinnah and that he was sure that it did not represent the real feelings of a large number of Muslims'. He referred to the Punjabi Muslims in particular in this connection.[128]

The Congress working committee resolutions had upset the Conservative government at home. Zetland was flushed with rage. He wrote:

> With their subservience to slogans which is one of their most irritating and baffling characteristics they reiterate the outworn formula that what we are engaged upon is an imperialist war and clinging pathetically to the fly-blown phylacteries they accuse us of raising the communal issue to the end that we may play the part of Tertius Gaudens in a Homeric Hindu–Muslim encounter unscrupulously staged by us. They repeat their demand for recognition of India as an independent nation and for the right to frame a new constitution through the agency of a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of adult franchise, as a pre-requisite to further cooperation.[129]

With fury unabated, and with a degree of sarcasm, Zetland remarked that the Congress had said that it 'would continue to explore the means of an honourable settlement even though the British Government has banged

the door in the face of the Congress . . . what is not apparent to me is how contact is to be resumed and from whom the next move is to come'.[130] Thus, as far as the Conservative government was concerned, there was no possibility of further dialogue with the Congress.

In the context of the clash between the governors and non-cooperating Congressmen Churchill observed in Cabinet that 'all that was necessary in order to avoid serious trouble was to grasp the nettle firmly'.[131] Such was the attitude of the Chamberlain Cabinet when India came up for discussion. Lord Zetland informed the House of Lords on 14 December 1939: 'Not the least of the obstacles is the difference of opinion between the Congress and the Muslim League as to the relation of the Congress and want of a better term are described compendiously as minorities.' He literally tried to impress that the Muslims were not minorities but belonged to the ruling race, which even Jinnah so far had not said about the Muslim rule in India. But Zetland went on: 'they are a community of from eighty to ninety millions with race [*sic*] memories of days, when for 200 years the Moghul dynasty ruled over a great part of the Indian subcontinent. They have behind them a tradition of military service which persists to this day and is exemplified by the high proportion of the Indian Army which they fill.'[132] When the Tories were faced with the questions of 'freedom', 'democracy' or 'dominion status', the Hindu–Muslim antagonism was raised as an obstacle against further constitutional advance. The first phase of initiatives, begun by the Labour Party with great hopes, ended in failure essentially because of the disinclination of the Conservative government in Great Britain and India to grasp the opportunity for eventual peace and progress.

The contrasting ideologies and world-views of the Labour Party and the Conservatives were reflected in their response to India's demand for freedom, democracy or dominion status. Leaving aside these issues of great import, the Conservative was sometimes characterized by racial arrogance and insensitivity, born of the belief of belonging to a ruling race. Even Leo Amery, a Conservative politician himself, was struck by the behaviour of Zetland 'who always looked at the ceiling', while talking even with personages like the Jam Saheb of Nawanagar, of the princely order (and a great cricketer). The Jam Saheb observed that at least Amery was 'easy to talk to, who looked in the face' instead of 'the ceiling'.[133] It is therefore not surprising to find Linlithgow giving his judgement on Clement Attlee's abilities, let alone Indians. He wrote to Lord Zetland, the biographer of Lord Curzon and erstwhile Governor of Bengal between 1917 and 1922: 'I have always liked Attlee but I have never been able to resist the conclusion that he is essentially a mediocre and this is reflected in the somewhat rigid state of mind.'[134] Linlithgow's great quality was holding interviews with Indians without conceding a point. He was incapable of visualizing the immediate trends of things to come; felt too superior either to discuss with Indians with an open mind or to permit even Zetland or Amery to

advise him on important issues, as his feeling of hurt expressed so often to Amery in his correspondence shows. He was a 'poor negotiator' according to Stafford Cripps,[135] with the closed mindset of a Tory. He refused to maintain a dialogue with Jawaharlal Nehru, the leader of the future modern India, perhaps because of his own intellectual inferiority. Linlithgow was a man of limited education and knowledge and equally limited vision. In contrast, Jawaharlal Nehru was well-informed, well-read, highly articulate and an intellectual himself, who put off Linlithgow by knowledge of world affairs. Linlithgow records that Nehru 'had enlarged on the profound difference the war might make on the system of the British Empire. I had to remind him that it might also produce a profound difference in other organization, where might Congress find themselves at the end of the campaign if they were now to decide to commit themselves to active opposition to Government.'[136] His down-to-earth argument and warning is obvious. He seems only to have understood what he considered to be practical politics and not 'doctrinaire' polemics. Jinnah was the pick of his choice in practical politics and wisdom; he cooperated with the British with a certain degree of *élan* against the Congress and, most importantly, debunked Gandhi and Nehru in a language which Linlithgow appreciated. Linlithgow's imperial philosophy was displayed in this passage to Amery: 'India and Burma have no natural association with the Empire, for which they are alien by race, history and religion . . . both are in the Empire because they are conquered countries . . . what we have to decide . . . is whether, whatever the feeling of India, we intend to stay in the country for our own reasons.'[137] Amery mildly protested that 'one or two things in the tone of Linlithgow's letter not altogether to my liking', and 'more significantly it alarmed Attlee', who asked 'is it worth considering whether someone should be charged with a mission to try and bring the political leaders together'.[138] Linlithgow seemed contemptuous of the Congress leaders whether they agreed with him or not. He was for Jinnah whom he cultivated and placated, and who proved to be a dependable ally of the British.

The resignation from office by the Congress Party turned out to be a most unwise and inopportune step. The Congress lost leverage within the government. Its power to negotiate with strength was undermined. It left the field open to Jinnah and the Muslim League in Indian politics. Jinnah was bound to exploit the situation for himself and the of the Muslim League. The British government was in need of the help of a sizeable segment of Indian population, and it was supplied by Jinnah who promised full Muslim support for the war effort. The Congress was rather naive in hoping that the government would dissolve the legislatures and announce fresh elections. Why should the government play the constitutional card during the emergency of war? Was it not natural to invoke section 93 of the Government of India Act 1935? Such a move was justifiable in the circumstances. In fact the War Cabinet was supportive of the measure; and

the British public seemed to veer round to the idea that the government had no other option but to govern the country directly.

Linlithgow–Jinnah: understanding and collaboration

Before an audience assembled to hear his presidential address at Patna, Jinnah observed: 'I have been told that the Muslim League is the supporter of imperialism and an ally of imperialism.' Equating himself with the Muslim League he continued: 'Inside the Legislature or outside the Legislature, have I on any single occasion supported imperialism, not to speak of proving myself an ally of Imperialism.' [Voices: No, no!] 'I say the Muslim League is not going to be an ally of anyone, but would be the ally of even the devil if need be in the interest of Muslims . . .' And, after a pause, Jinnah said: 'It is not because we are in love with imperialism; in politics one has to play one's game as on the chess board.' Then Jinnah's populist streak came into play: 'I say the Muslims and the Muslim League have only one ally and that ally is the Muslim nation; and the one and only one to whom they look for help is God.'[139]

That is how Jinnah performed. In the name of God and the nation, he would not refuse to be an ally of imperialism if it helped the Muslim cause or suited his leadership. Jinnah was fond of comparing the game of politics with that of chess. The British government, at any rate, had found an ally in Jinnah and the Muslim League at the critical juncture when the Second World War enveloped the whole world.

But Jinnah had been a favourite of the British for another reason. His blistering attacks on Gandhi and the Congress began much earlier. At the Lucknow session of the All India Muslim League in October 1937, Jinnah declared that his Muslim League stood 'to safeguard the rights and interests of the Mussalmans and other minorities, effectively that is the basic and cardinal principle. In the same speech, he condemned the nationalist Muslim as 'the worst toady on earth, the most wicked *communalist* today amongst Muslims, when he *surrenders* unconditionally to the Congress and abuses his own community, becomes the nationalist of nationalists of tomorrow!'[140] With such a severe denunciation of Muslims who cooperated with the Congress and joined the nationalist mainstream, Jinnah hoped to keep the rest of his flock away from the Congress fold. Later, of course, when 'the Pakistan resolution' came up for discussion with a promise of a separate homeland, he received an overwhelming response from Muslims.

Meanwhile he continued with 'we' and 'they' throughout his speech, and declared: 'Providence came to our help . . . and the Congress, thank heavens, went out of office. I think they are regretting their resignation very much. This bluff was called off.'[141] Again Jinnah's obsession with Gandhi remained unabated: 'Why does not Mr Gandhi agree, and I have suggested to him more than once and I repeat it again from this platform, why does not

Mr Gandhi honestly now acknowledge that the Congress is a Hindu Congress, that he does not represent anybody except the solid body of a Hindu People? Why should not Gandhi be proud to say, "I am a Hindu, Congress has solid Hindu backing"? I am not ashamed of saying that I am a Mussalman.' [Hear, hear! and applause.][142] And Linlithgow accepted Jinnah's support for the war, although he had set conditions for it; and rejected Gandhi's 'unconditional support' given by him at his interview with Linlithgow on 4 September 1939. This was despite the fact that Gandhi was very 'honest' and 'emotional', as recorded by Linlithgow himself. Gandhi was deeply upset at the prospect of the destruction of the landmarks of British civilization such as the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey.[143] In spite of this unequivocal expression of his honest espousal of the British cause against fascism, Linlithgow preferred Jinnah's Muslim League support rather than that of the Congress. Why?

Jinnah's interview of 4 September 1939 with the Viceroy was quite revealing. For one thing, Linlithgow records, 'Jinnah had come with the object of offering me his party's support in return for the abandonment of Federation.' Second, 'He [Jinnah] hoped I would do what I could to strengthen his hand. That is why he wanted something positive to take to his followers. They were saying to him [Jinnah], why should we fight to perpetuate conditions in India that must shortly bring about complete domination by the Hindus. What could he say to that? Hence his anxiety that His Majesty's Government should soon, if not immediately, announce that the constitution was to be completely overhauled and reshaped.' Third, 'His friends in the Congress Provinces were suffering cruelly. Let His Majesty's Government at least protect them in the enjoyment of their lives, their property and their own culture and mode of living.' Fourth, on a 'recent statement' of Jinnah that 'democratic government was unsuitable to this country', he said that 'the escape from the impasse . . . lay in the adoption of partition'. Finally, Jinnah wanted the provincial government under Congress dismissed because '*the Congress will not stand by you*' and '*they will destroy both you British and us Muslims*'.[144] Linlithgow recorded that 'the conversation was exceedingly friendly throughout'; he obviously felt satisfied with Jinnah, and slowly and inexorably agreed with him on most issues welcoming the support which was finally pledged by the Muslim League.

Linlithgow informed Lord Zetland about his talk with Gandhi: 'His whole attitude could not have been better and in his conversation he showed the same breadth of approach and the same disinclination to trouble about minor or subsidiary issues as I have always noticed in him . . . I cannot believe in fact that he would have been likely to strike a huckster's bargain at this stage.'[145] So honourable seemed Gandhi, yet Linlithgow's choice fell on Jinnah. In his letter to Zetland he said: 'I felt it wiser to be patient with Jinnah and *endeavoured to lead him into the direction which we desired; and if*

indeed I can give any help to these Muslim leaders to get move together than they are at the moment, I will do so.'[146] Furthermore, 'our concern must of course be to secure all the support that we can so long as we do so without giving rise to false expectations or misunderstandings in our objective of the conduct of the war . . . His [Jinnah's] suggestion that in the interest of securing the support of him, Jinnah, and his friends, one should go to the point of driving the Congress Ministries out of office is characteristic.'[147] There is no doubt that, in spite of Linlithgow's reservations about Jinnah's demands, he was inclined to support him to secure his wholehearted cooperation. The Congress ministries were after all driven from office, to the great delight of Jinnah, and as we have seen, of Winston Churchill as well. In fact, the entire British administration seemed happy that the Congress left office.

A more important outcome of the interview with Jinnah was the realization of the inner dynamics of his antagonism towards the Congress and the fear of Hindu domination, which seem to have led him to believe that a solution of the impasse could be found in the 'partition' of India. However nebulous the idea of partition may have been, Jinnah's mind seemed to revolve around it. To the view, as expressed by Linlithgow, 'that partition seemed less practical the more one examined it in detail', Jinnah replied, 'What about Burma? They are happy enough. I did not think this retort worth pursuing!'[148] Although Linlithgow did not enter into a discussion on this subject, he did start the process of strengthening Muslim solidarity by bringing together other Muslim leaders. Jinnah had asked for the Viceroy's help to tame Sikander Hyat Khan.[149] And Linlithgow wanted to help[150] Jinnah against the Fazlul Haq–Sikander combination which, according to the Viceroy, had 'elements' of greater strength. He had noticed that Jinnah's position was not formidable as yet: 'I may remark in parenthesis', he told Zetland, 'that I have a feeling that there are a good many hounds at the moment on Jinnah's heels among his co-religionists; that however is a matter of internal Muslim politics . . .'[151] Yet Linlithgow embarked on a policy of wooing Jinnah and the Muslim League.

Incidentally, Jinnah's ego was greatly satisfied when the Viceroy invited him for the interview on 4 September 1939. That very day the Viceroy had met Gandhi also. Jinnah felt that he was equated with Gandhi for the first time. He declared:

> After the war was declared, the Viceroy naturally wanted help from the Muslim League. It was only then that he realised that the Muslim League was a power. For it will be remembered that up to the time of the declaration of war, the Viceroy never thought of me, but of Gandhi and Gandhi alone. I have been a leader of an important party in the Legislature for a considerable time, larger than the one I have the honour to lead at present, the Muslim

> League Party in the Central Legislature. Yet the Viceroy never thought of me before. Therefore when I got this invitation from the Viceroy along with Gandhi, I wondered within myself why I was so suddenly promoted and then I concluded the answer was the "All India Muslim League" whose President I happen to be. I believe that was the worst shock that the Congress High Command received because it challenged their sole authority to speak on behalf of India.[152]

According to Jinnah, the Viceroy recognized his claim to speak for 'Muslim India'; as he called it on several occasions, and the importance of Muslim League being the sole mouthpiece of the Muslims. To this end, of course, Linlithgow provided as much assistance as possible. Several interviews took place between the Viceroy and Jinnah during September–December 1939; statements were issued, and some of the major demands of Jinnah were met fully or partially. These moves led to an increase in the prestige of Jinnah among the Muslims and in the Indian political scenario as well. But for the Viceroy's support for the Muslim League and Jinnah, the two would not have risen in stature.

The immediate consequence of Linlithgow's interview of 4 September, however, was the support from Jinnah for the British war effort. Jinnah waited until the Congress issued its statement on 14 September 1939 demanding a declaration of war aims from the British government. The Muslim League issued its resolution on 18 September 1939. The first paragraph of the Muslim League resolution expressed its appreciation of the Viceroy's invitation to Jinnah to a discussion of the international situation. The next three paragraphs criticized the federal scheme and the working of the system of provincial autonomy, especially in relation to the Congress-ruled provinces wherein the worst form of tyranny and oppression were carried, yet the governors failed to intervene as stipulated in the Instrument of Instruction. The fifth paragraph spoke of 'Muslim India' being opposed to Hindu domination. The sixth paragraph of the resolution dealt with the war, condemning 'unprovoked aggression', expressing the Muslim League's sympathy with Poland, England and France and stressing the need to fulfil the conditions if 'real and solid Muslim cooperation and support to Great Britain in this hour of her trial' were to be secured. The conditions dealt with the problems of security and justice to be secured to the Muslims in the Congress-governed provinces, and urged the British government for 'an assurance that no declaration regarding the question of constitutional advance for India should be made without the consent and approval of the All India Muslim League nor any constitution be framed and finally adopted by His Majesty's Government and the British Parliament without such consent and approval'. Finally, it offered 'full effective cooperation of the Mussalmans' by taking into 'confidence the

Muslim League which is the only organization that can speak on behalf of Muslim India'.[153]

The Muslim League resolution of 18 September was an excellent bargaining exercise; more significantly, it suited the British interests admirably in all respects. After listing the bargaining points, it offered full cooperation to the British government in India in its war efforts. Linlithgow's comment is illuminating. He said, while 'emphasizing Muslim grievances and repeating those somewhat unsubstantial allegations of the complete failure of the Governors to discharge their obligations under the Act to protect the Muslim minorities' and 'promptly after an addition to cover Palestine and Arabic' issues 'coming down in favour of cooperation',[154] the resolution was quite interesting. Linlithgow seemed more concerned about Jinnah's unsubstantiated charges against the governors than the unsubstantiated Muslim grievances which had been found to be untrue after enquiry, yet these continued to hold centre stage in the resolution. Linlithgow, after maintaining discreet silence over this issues for two and a half years, now felt that 'the depth and sincerity of Muslim apprehensions in the minority provinces' were real.[155] Zetland advised that 'any denial of its existence [of Muslim grievances] by yourself or Governors will be likely to present circumstances greatly to exacerbate Muslim feelings'.[156] The issue was no longer whether the allegations had any basis or not, but it was the Muslim feelings which needed to be softened, mollified and respected. Zetland informed the Viceroy that Lord Snell, the Labour peer, was 'preparing to ask me for an appreciation of the position in India' as to 'the nature and reality of Muslim grievances in the Congress provinces' so that he could raise this in the House of Lords before the Parliament rises.[157] The myth needed to be perpetuated to sustain British imperialism in India. Sikander Hyat Khan told Linlithgow in his interview on 6 October 1939 that 'Jinnah realized perfectly that there was nothing I [Linlithgow] could do' unless 'it was a question of a perfectly clear cut case, which seems very unlikely to arise'.[158] In his interview with Linlithgow on 12 January 1940, Jinnah agreed with him when the Viceroy told him 'that I could not honestly say that the charges that my late Ministers had pursued an anti-Muslim policy could be justified. He replied that he accepted that . . . yet his grievances against the Congress remained.'[159]

Nevertheless, Linlithgow was mighty pleased with the Muslim League resolution. Its immediate result was that Linlithgow declared that there was no need to go into 'the academic argument of merits and demerits of the principle of democracy'.[160] Within three days of the passing of Muslim League resolution he said that 'I shall endeavour . . . greatly to see without further delay the representatives of Muslims, the Europeans, etc.' and 'I should endeavour to secure an effective representation of non-Congress Hindu opinion' also.[161] He was delighted to find Jinnah on his side, and Jinnah offered to meet him to 'discuss' or 'explain' the resolution or 'expand'

it further if the Viceroy wished.[162] On 22 September 1939, Linlithgow telegraphed the Secretary of State: 'I think it would probably be well for me to see Jinnah without much further delay. I am anxious to consolidate such support as there may be on our side.' He also informed Zetland: 'I am telling Stewart in reply to his personal telegram of 21 September that we better mark time for the moment as situation will restore itself in one [way] or the other in the next few days.'[163]

Linlithgow was even prepared to tolerate Jinnah's 'tiresome as usual' behaviour. He had asked Jinnah to see him on 26 September because Gandhi was also meeting him on that day, but Jinnah informed the Viceroy he could only meet him after 1 October since he was visiting the Nizam. Sikander Hyat Khan and Zafrullah Khan were aghast at Jinnah's impertinence but the Viceroy said 'it is no use losing our temper with Jinnah, irritating as he may be'.[164] Jinnah met Lord Linlithgow on 6 October 1939. The interview itself seemed short enough. What transpired between them is not fully recorded, but Jinnah, when asked about the declaration of war aims, seems to have replied: 'If the declaration meant nothing it would not be worth giving. If on the other hand, it meant something it was likely to produce increased bitterness and tension of feeling between the communities and interests affected.'[165] Linlithgow records his pleasure at having met Jinnah: 'I find him in more friendly mood and readier to cooperate than I have known him, and his attitude, throughout the discussion, was eminently reasonable.'[166] Sikander Hyat Khan met Jinnah soon after the interview and told Linlithgow that Jinnah considered the talks with the Viceroy 'had been most successful and Jinnah was delighted by them and was in a very different mood'.[167]

It was quite obvious that Jinnah was being placated, pampered, prodded and cajoled to be on the right side of the government; Jinnah had responded with as much alacrity as had been shown by Linlithgow. It was truly a reciprocal, give-and-take relationship, with a certain degree of mutual confidence. At a time when the Congress spokesman, Jawaharlal Nehru, was insisting on the government declaring its war aims and whether it was fighting for 'democracy', Jinnah was probably persuaded to write to the *Manchester Guardian* giving his views on 'democracy'. In a telling article for the paper published on 21 October 1939, Jinnah observed that democracy in India 'can only mean Hindu Raj'; he reasserted 'Muslim India's' objection to the Congress claim that it alone represented the whole Indian people; urged that no constitutional advance was possible without agreement with minorities; and asked the government to reopen the constitutional position from the beginning.[168] Zetland was greatly pleased and asked for such 'debating points' as he called them, and hoped to use them in the Parliament sooner or later.[169]

On 5 November 1939, Jinnah wrote to Linlithgow, reiterating that India's future constitution should be reconsidered *de novo*; that no declaration,

'either in principle or otherwise, shall be made' or any constitutional changes introduced by the British government or Parliament 'without the approval or consent of the two major communities in India, viz., the Mussalmans and Hindus'. The other point of the letter related to the Arabs and Palestine issues: the British government 'should try and meet all reasonable national demands of the Arabs in Palestine' and 'that Indian troops will not be used outside India against any Muslim power or country'.[170] The Viceroy replied on 7 November: 'I fully appreciate the points which you raise and I will not fail to let you have as early a reply as practicable.'[171] Jinnah's letter was considered by the British Cabinet and the text of a letter to be sent to Jinnah was telegraphed by the Secretary of State for India on 12 November; it formed the basis of the Viceroy's reply to Jinnah sent immediately thereafter: 'I can assure you that His Majesty's Government are not under any misapprehension as to the importance of the contentment of the Muslim Community to stability and the success of any constitutional development in India. You need therefore have no fear that weight which your community's position in India necessarily gives their views will be underrated.' As for the use of Muslim force in Arab countries the letter stated: 'Every precaution has been taken by His Majesty's Government at the instance of the Government of India on the matter [use of Muslim forces in Arab countries] is fully respected.'[172]

The closeness of the relationship between the Linlithgow government and Jinnah's Muslim League was clear and it was utilized by the British government to good effect. On 16 November 1939, the Secretary of State for India, unnerved as he was about Krishna Menon's India League offensive regarding the Congress demands in the British media as well as in the USA, telegraphed the Viceroy: 'Perhaps you will consider whether it is possible for you to inform Jinnah of India League statement and let him know that your information indicates desirability of further public statement by him through Reuters if his attitude and the case of Muslim League is not to be misrepresented both here and America.'[173] Jinnah waited for the India League statement and said he would certainly answer.[174] It was this kind of mutually beneficial and reciprocal relationship which had been forged by Linlithgow's efforts. He recorded: 'He [Jinnah] had given me very valuable help by standing against the Congress claims and I was duly grateful. It was clear that if he, Mr Jinnah, had supported the Congress demand and confronted me with a joint demand, the strain upon me and His Majesty's Government would have been very great indeed. I thought, therefore, I could claim to have a vested interest in them.'[175] There could be no better illustration of Linlithgow's appreciation of Jinnah's collaboration with the government in return for which Jinnah received ample rewards in being recognized as the sole spokesman of 'Muslim India' and the British government's firm resolve and determination to stand by the Muslim League demand, disregarding the Congress viewpoints and reasonable

demands. Not only that, Linlithgow prodded Jinnah consistently from this time on to put forward 'concrete proposals' for his consideration as early as possible. Suffice to say at this juncture that the so-called 'concrete proposals' culminated in the 'Pakistan resolution' at Lahore in March 1940.

Gowher Rizvi argues in defence of Linlithgow's action that 'it was necessary to prevent the League from joining hands with the Congress, at least for the duration of the War'.[176] He writes: 'the reasons behind the British efforts to encourage the League' not to join hands with the Congress, was so that the British government could effectively thwart the Congress in its demands, which 'amounted to independence'.[177] The argument is quite misleading. First and foremost, the demand for 'independence' was advanced by the Congress in its resolution of 8 October 1939 and not earlier. There was ample opportunity for acceptance of the modest demand of dominion status, which would have been supported by the overwhelming body of national opinion and the Congress itself. Only when Linlithgow stonewalled any advance in respect of the declaration of war aims, and the grant of dominion status and self-government after the conclusion of the war was not conceded did the Congress resign from office. The attitude of the government exemplified not only an utter lack of foresight but also a certain degree of dishonesty on its part in dealing with the situation. On the question of the ultimate goal of attainment of self-government the Muslim League had not shown hostility on 4 September 1939 when Jinnah met the Viceroy. It was Linlithgow's prodding which led Jinnah to ask 'for something' different.

Linlithgow had said, it must be pointed out, in his declaration of 15 October that the idea of dominion status was 'enshrined' in the parliamentary records; that Lord Irwin's declaration of 1929 mentioning the principle of dominion status still held ground; and that the Government of India Act 1935 had not been averse to it and envisaged the grant of self-government ultimately. If that was so, why did Linlithgow remain silent in respect of the declaration of dominion status as the future objective of the British government? As late as 4 November 1939, when Gandhi asked Linlithgow whether the British objective was to grant dominion status in accordance with the Statute of Westminster, he answered in the affirmative, but again did not offer it in any of his discussions held with the Congress.

It had been argued by Linlithgow that, if the Muslim League joined the Congress and a joint demand was put before him, his position would have been very difficult. Assuming that the Congress and the Muslim League had joined together and demanded dominion status and self-government – the future objective of the British in India, whose principles had been discussed and 'enshrined' in the British Parliament, as stated by Linlithgow himself – it would have meant that, after the conclusion of war, the time-honoured pledges would have to be met. Besides, the declaration would have satisfied

all the political parties and the government would have received the willing cooperation of all concerned to the war effort. After all, this was what that the government wanted. Where was the difficulty? Rizvi's tacit support of Linlithgow's argument is not surprising at all; it is understandable for those historians who believed that the demand for Pakistan was the most rational demand and that British support for it was an act of great statesmanship.

Since Linlithgow feared the collusion of two political parties it was rational for him to ensure that such an eventuality did not arise and so he tried his best to keep the two parties as separate as possible. If he used the communal card for the attainment of this objective it was quite natural for him to do so. No one should have blamed him or the Tories, had they been honest enough to acknowledge it. But the entire mythology of British historiography supported by the Tory politicians of different hues over the past hundred years or so has been a steadfast denial of any thought or action on their part which might have led to the destruction of the unity of India. The crux of the problem of India lay in the Tory belief that they could continue to hold on to India for another 30 or 50 years, as Linlithgow had said, or 'for ever' as Winston Churchill said in 1935 while addressing members of the House of Commons. In one of the rare moments of self-revelation, Linlithgow is reported to have told Lord Wavell that 'the chief features of the problem of Indian political progress were the stupidity of Indians and the dishonesty of the British'.[178]

Let us take a close look at Jinnah's interview with Viceroy Linlithgow held on 4 November 1939,[179] a comprehensive record of which was maintained by Linlithgow and was sent by him to Lord Zetland as an enclosure to his letter of 6 November 1939. This was another landmark interview held between Jinnah and Linlithgow. The same day Gandhi also met the Viceroy, but it is Jinnah's talks which are most revealing and of great significance. It could be argued that the future course of Indian history was decided on that day; the day on which Linlithgow and Jinnah devised a plan of action, subsequently leading to the historic Pakistan resolution of March 1940, passed by the All India Muslim League at Lahore. Linlithgow was privy to the plan of a separate homeland for Muslims at this juncture. It was he who encouraged Jinnah.[180] Throughout the discussion Linlithgow behaved as though he was a member of the Executive Council of the Muslim League. He pointed out the shortcomings in Jinnah's plans, asking him to think over again, take care and overcome the objections before putting up his final proposals to him. Linlithgow records – mark the language – 'I said to Jinnah that I hope he would not mind me impertinent if I talked for a moment of his position and of that of the Muslim League as developed by him. He had given me very valuable help by standing firm against the Congress claims and I was duly grateful…I thought therefore, I could claim to have a vested interest in his position.'[181]

Linlithgow has often been accused of not opening his mind in discussions, especially with the Congress leaders or his opponents like Sir Stafford Cripps, who had come with a proposal for constitutional advance and met him on 23 December 1939. Linlithgow maintained: 'my attitude was one of cautious reserve'; and 'my mind was entirely open', and in the end, 'as you will see, not very much constructive emerged'. Similarly, he had resisted every move on the part of the Congress and opposed steadfastly all demands, most of which were not insurmountable. On the other hand, his mind was open to Jinnah's viewpoints and proposals. Linlithgow had decided to be in close alliance with Jinnah and proved to be the prime mover of a policy of cooperation and collaboration between Jinnah and his Muslim League and the British. And this phase of collaboration was cemented by the end of 1939. Jinnah said that 'he had every confidence in the present government [in India and Britain] and believed that it would do its best to look after the interest of minorities and the like, and discharge pledges that had been given'.[182] But he was worried about the proposals being discussed by 'people' like Stafford Cripps and statements made by Lord Samuel in Parliament that democracy of the British pattern might be forced on India. Linlithgow felt Jinnah 'repudiated the idea of democracy, self-government and federation, because of the risk involved in them of Hindu domination at the centre'.[183] The Jinnah–Linlithgow understanding was cemented around this time.

Linlithgow records:

> We discussed this up and down, and he agreed finally to let me have a letter setting out his point of view which I promised I would put to you [Zetland] and discuss with you. I have just had that letter and I am sending a copy of it to you by this bag. I hope to comment in greater detail on it when I have a little more leisure. For the moment, I will only say that while I am, as you know, fully conscious of the argument on the other side, I cannot feel that the apprehensions expressed by Jinnah on behalf of his community are wholly lacking in substance and I do feel increasingly . . . that we may have to go a good deal further than we have done in giving weight to their point of view, that the fact that they are a numerical minority, cannot be allowed to be a decisive factor in the framing of our policy in relation to them and to the numerical majority. At the same time, as we both recognize it will be very difficult to accept the claim of any minority however substantial to hold up for ever all constitutional progress, though in enunciating that proposition one has also to give weight to the fact that a constitutional advance on paper, which is immediately followed by the most serious difficulties with a community of 90,000,000 and a virile community at that,

> would be short-sighted to a degree from our own point of view as well as from that of India.[184]

Thus the new equations were being contemplated; new solutions of some of the existing problems arising out of Hindu–Muslim antagonisms were to be found; new and solid alliances were sought with Jinnah at the centre of things.

Lord Linlithgow further suggested to Zetland that at 'some forthcoming occasion to admit in the House of Lords or in a speech in the country that in considering the problem one does *definitely* have to give weight not only to the size of the minority – twice the population of the British Isles and as large as the whole of the present German Reich – but also to the deep cultural division and the fundamental cleavage on the religious issues. But these are delicate matters and require careful thought . . .'[185] Following the lead given by Linlithgow, Lord Zetland spoke on 14 December 1939 in the House of Lords highlighting the nature of the problem in India. Jinnah and Linlithgow remained in constant touch with each other until the Pakistan resolution was passed: when it was actually declared at Lahore, the Viceroy expressed little surprise commenting that it was merely a bargaining move on the part of Jinnah. Jinnah's two-nation theory could not be brushed aside as merely a bargaining exercise on his part nor could his demand for two sovereign states of Hindustan and Pakistan be taken lightly. Linlithgow, however, tried to underplay the importance of the event to minimize the devastating effect it was likely to have on the future of India.

In striking contrast to the reciprocity and cordiality of Linlithgow's relations with Jinnah and the Muslim League, Linlithgow sabotaged every move of the Congress to come to terms with the government or with other political parties. He could not overcome his party's innate hostility to the Congress.[186] Clement Attlee was shrewd enough to notice this even as the Government of India Bill 1935 was given its third reading in the House of Commons. During his intervention on 4 June 1935 he urged his own countrymen to overcome their prejudices against the Congress:

> The Indian question is the easiest subject I know for destructive criticism . . . Does the constitutional scheme provide a medium through which the living forces of India can operate because what we have to deal with are the forces of modern India, a living India, and not the dead India of the past. If we are to do anything with India, we have to bring modern forces into play, and it is here that the importance of the attack on the Congress Party comes in. For good or ill, the Congress Party is one of the dominating factors in the situation. It is no use ignoring it, and it is useless and futile merely to abuse it. We may disagree with it, but within it are very many of the forces that are going to make up modern India.[187]

It was the most rational and passionate plea put forward by the leader of opposition in Parliament. He continued: 'My first objection to this Bill is that I think it is deliberately framed so as to exclude as far as possible the Congress Party from effective power in the new constitution. On many occasions provisions have been deliberately put forward with this end in view. It has been done at the centre by giving undue weight to the Princes... The election of the chamber are split on communal lines... But all the way through the Government have yielded time after time to the states and time after time to the minorities communities, but have always stood up against any yielding to Congress and the nationalists.'[188]

For Winston Churchill the bill was 'a great and melancholy event'; he hoped that 'in the crashing cheers which no doubt will hail the majority triumph, we pray there may not mingle the knell of the British Empire in the East'. He quoted in the end of his speech the conversation between the Wedding Guest and the Ancient Mariner:

> God save thee, ancient mariner!
> From the fiends that plague thee thus!
> Why look'st thou so – like my cross-bow
> I met the Albatross.[189]

Leo Amery commented: 'My rt. hon. friend the member from Epping [Winston Churchill] has always regarded the development of Dominion status as a process of disintegration which is now reaching an end – the end of all real imperial unity... I regard the step which we took in 1926 and regard the Statute of Westminster, as merely a prelude, and an essential prelude, towards more effective and closer cooperation in future.'[190] The great ideas manifested in these speeches were obviously lost on Linlithgow and he embarked on a policy of safeguarding British interests not by granting self-government to India but by unleashing forces demanding communal separation.

Linlithgow's attitude, unyielding as it was in respect of Congress, was most cooperative as far as the minorities and princely states were concerned. On 21 September 1939, after a series of exchanges with a cross-section of political leaders, he telegraphed Zetland 'that public opinion will be very concerned not to lose, or weaken our hold on India, or to make further constitutional advance which may be *regarded prejudicial to our friends, the princes and the Muslims*'[191] (italics added). With such a mindset, it was impossible to reach any settlement of the political problem in India.

Gandhi in all sincerity had asked Linlithgow to help resolve the communal question. He said the Viceroy 'could make a contribution of great value in this connection. The Muslims were impressed by the caution exercised by the Viceroy, it was possible for him to move them gently towards greater degree of cooperation with Congress... [The Viceroy] ought to do this, as

this was the only direction of true advance in the long run.'[192] But the Viceroy had no use for such an amiable request. If anything it went against the Congress, exposing its weakness. Again, when Linlithgow and Gandhi met on 26 September 1939, Gandhi pleaded: 'It was vital... to make an important experiment with courage and do it soon particularly in the face of the international situation.' According to Linlithgow, Gandhi offered the entire strength of the Congress for the war effort: 'If we could make up our mind to buy Congress we should buy the finest propaganda machine in the East.'[193] But the Viceroy refused to do business with the Congress saying that 'the claims of Muslim India and of those areas which predominantly manned the army' needed to be taken into consideration. 'It was quite impossible in the circumstances', Linlithgow said, 'to accept the Congress claim to be only organization' to be considered.[194] It was clear that the Viceroy had made up his mind to reject the Congress offer of support on condition of a declaration of war aims by the end of September 1939. Further exchanges between the Viceroy and other political leaders during the greater part of October–November 1939 were essentially public relations exercise on the part of the government.

Apart from being hostile to the Congress, Linlithgow had struck a deal with Jinnah. Their mutual political manoeuvrings were clear. Linlithgow saw in their discussions 'signs of new claims and new approaches beginning to show themselves'. On 12 January 1940, Jinnah met the Viceroy, ostensibly to discuss the support of Muslims for the Red Cross appeal, but Jinnah asked for 'an assurance that no new pronouncements or new constitutional departure should be made without the approval of the Muslims'.[195] Linlithgow told him that if he did so he [Jinnah] would be further subject to the 'opprobrium' of being 'the arch supporter of imperialism' and that he was 'being used by us to play our own game'.[196] Jinnah agreed and said: 'For that reason he [Jinnah] had suggested that our assurance should take the form of saying that pronouncement of further advance would have to receive the approval of the two major communities.'[197] Such was the closeness of their relationship. The government and Jinnah were in league on all matters relating to the forthcoming negotiations for any constitutional settlement, so that Linlithgow could run the government without any obstruction from the Congress. Jinnah told Linlithgow: 'Show the Congress that they can get nothing further out of you and once they know that they will be more likely to come to a settlement, and even if they do not what do you lose?'[198] There was another meeting with Jinnah on Sunday 13 January 1940, and Linlithgow recorded: 'I said to Jinnah that most people in India do not envisage an independence in which she was left without the support of His Majesty's Government. Mr Jinnah said he wholly agreed' and observed 'that the Hindus were not capable of running a government'.[199] Linlithgow was very happy with the outcome of the interview and recorded: 'Our conversation which was more friendly almost than any I have had with

Mr Jinnah made it, I fear, perfectly clear that no move could be looked for from him at the moment.'[200]

The Viceroy also recorded that he asked: 'Assuming we gave him the assurance which he wanted was he confident that he would be able to make an agreement with Congress?' To this Jinnah replied, 'But what have we to lose if no agreement is reached?'[201] That was the essence of the attitude of Jinnah. Neither the government nor the Muslim League had anything to lose if the talks broke down with the Congress. It is thus wrong to perpetuate the myth propounded by the tory government and its supporters at home and in India that the talks failed because of Congress intransigence. The 'veto' was provided by the government of Linlithgow to Jinnah on 6 February 1940 when a joint communique was issued which clearly stated: 'His Excellency assured Mr Jinnah that His Majesty's Government were fully alive to the necessity of safeguarding the legitimate interests of the minorities and that he need be under no apprehension that the importance of these interests would be lost sight of.'[202] A perceptive and close observer of events of the time, Durga Das, recorded that a 'top Briton' based in India told him the belief among the British in India was that as long as Gandhi lived there was no possibility of 'any real progress' in political settlement. That was the view held by Lord Linlithgow and Lord Wavell as well. The 'top Briton' also observed that 'Mr Jinnah will never come to an agreement during the war. While he is intransigent he is on top; the moment he settles with the Congress, the latter will be on top. Once he agrees to a transitional arrangement the League will get merged in the nationalist movement and will never be able to dictate terms to the Congress. Mr Jinnah's intransigence suits us, and if he maintains his attitude and keeps his hands off the Punjab, which is our special preserve, he will deserve support at the end of the war.'[203]

Jinnah's 'transitional' demands on January 1940 were that, first, coalition ministries should be formed; second, if two-thirds of the Muslim members objected to any measure in the provincial legislature, it should be dropped; third, *Bande Mataram* should be abandoned; fourth, Congress flags should not be flown on public buildings; finally, the Congress must abandon 'their wrecking tactics' against the Muslim League. As for the principle of collective responsibility, Jinnah told the Viceroy 'he could not hold to collective responsibility'.[204] The discussion with Gandhi was inconclusive; he rejected the idea of coalition ministries on the plea that it was unworkable.[205] As for the use of the Congress flag on public buildings and the singing of *Bande Mataram* in schools, Jawaharlal Nehru pointed out that the tricoloured flag was agreed by all political parties including the Muslim League to be the national flag and the *Bande Mataram* was not a national anthem but a national song reminiscent of the nationalist struggle; in any case this matter could be discussed and some solution could easily be found. Similarly it was pointed out that the nationalist Muslims were a part of the nationalist mainstream. They had taken a leading role in the Indian struggle

for freedom and the Congress as a national organization was bound to support them. Any Indian, whether Muslim, Hindu, Parsi, Christian or Sikh, was welcome to join the Congress and the nationalist Muslims had joined the Congress of their own free will and they were now an essential part of Congress organization and its ideology; the Congress did not follow what Jinnah called 'wrecking tactics' to destroy the Muslim League. On the issue of dominion status, Gandhi asked Linlithgow 'to leave it to India to say what she wants and take the consequences of her mistake if she makes one, rather than to limit her freedom of choice by confining her to the Statute of Westminster, dominion status or any specific proposal'. But it was too late to resume discussion. Linlithgow recorded after two and half hour discussion with Gandhi: 'Atmosphere very friendly but *nothing doing*.' This happened on 5 February 1940.[206]

Jinnah had an interview with the Viceroy the next day, 6 February.[207] He complained: 'I [Linlithgow] never appeared to break with Gandhi and always left the impression that I was going to see him before long and the negotiations would be resumed. That naturally produced throughout the country the fear that the Congress government might return to office at any moment... We ought to make clear to the Congress without undue delay that *there was nothing doing*. If the Congress ministers did return to office under existing conditions, there would be a civil war in India.' Although the Viceroy remonstrated with Jinnah that he should not talk in terms of a civil war and that the government would not oppose Congress returning to office after an agreement, the fact remained that there was 'nothing doing' for the Congress and it never returned to office. Whether Jinnah's threat of a civil war had anything to do with the government's 'nothing doing' attitude we do not know. The government, supported by some historians, argued that the Congress was responsible for the breakdown of talks and negotiations: by remaining out of power it lost the bargaining power with the British government. Same have argued that the Congress intransigence gave Jinnah the power of 'veto'. But these developments were an outcome of the alliance forged between Linlithgow and Jinnah, outlined above.

An interesting sidelight of the Linlithgow–Jinnah 'nothing doing' syndrome should not go unnoticed. Fazlul Haq, the Bengal premier, and Sikander Hyat Khan, the Punjab premier, had sought a meeting with the Viceroy, who saw them on 3 February 1940. Fazlul Haq, according to the Viceroy, was 'very communal' and 'intransigent' and complained that the government did not do enough to 'make the Muslim case understood better at home' and that the Muslims were not 'adequately represented'. The Viceroy noted: 'I asked him [Haq] whether there was any suggestion that I had let down either the Muslims or any other minority. Both Premiers replied emphatically in the negative. I suggested to Haq that the best way of getting the Muslim case properly understood (and nobody would be

better pleased than I should if he could get further appreciation of it) would be to produce something constructive and positive.'[208] While Gandhi was met with the 'nothing doing' response, it is important to notice that the Viceroy was lenient and pleasant to these leaders despite their impertinence. In respect of supporting the Muslim cause, he had stressed to the Secretary of State for India on 28 January 1940, just a few days before, that 'I am, I would repeat, fully alive to the essential necessity of keeping in view the position of the Muslims and other minorities and the states and of avoiding any idea that we are trying to come to an arrangement with one party only',[209] meaning of course the Congress.

On the question of persuading Jinnah 'to be ready with a constructive scheme of their own', the Viceroy called Sikander Hyat Khan on 25 January 1940 for a discussion: 'Muslim position as at present represented by Jinnah seemed to me to be unhelpful and static to a dangerous degree and unlikely to be one which could hope to hold for very long. Sikander said he agreed and proposed when he saw Jinnah on 3rd February to let him know privately that it was in his opinion essential that the Working Committee of the Muslim League should be ready with a constructive scheme of their own. He has every intention of forcing the Committee and Jinnah to produce such a constructive scheme at the risk of difficulty with Jinnah and a split.'[210] Sikander Hyat Khan's concept of a constructive scheme, however, was much different from that of Jinnah, produced in March 1940 in the form of the Pakistan resolution.

Sikander Hyat Khan's scheme had been discussed with Bhulabhai Desai of the Congress, yet he asked 'his Congress friends not to be constructive at the moment, as whatever scheme they put forward Jinnah would decry them. Better they should wait for the appropriate moment.'[211] As far as his own constructive scheme was concerned he wanted 'Provincial Committees to protect minorities with statutory powers to call for papers and if necessary to hear witnesses and a right thereafter to approach the Governor direct. If after approaching the Governor they were still not satisfied there might be an arrangement to an appeal for the Federal Court. Sikander was strongly opposed to doing away with the collective responsibility. If the Governor had to take the views of individual and contending ministers into consideration, he would be placed in a hopeless position. No one could tell how the whole issue was going to work out. India might very well find that she needed His Majesty's Government to keep order between the two main parties, but it was of course no good doing anything of the type at this stage.'[212] Jinnah's preference for doing away with the concept of collective responsibility was bound to invite the intervention of the Governor.

Not satisfied with Sikander Hyat Khan's approach to the problem, Linlithgow asked Sikander to meet Jinnah; they met on 2 February and Sikander 'strongly urged on him the need for a constructive approach.

Jinnah had publicly repeated on 2 February 1940 that the Muslim League still stood for the scrapping of the Government of India Act 1935 to reconsider the constitutional question. According to the Viceroy, Jinnah also indicated that 'he was now out for complete partition with safeguards for members of his community in the minority provinces. If the safeguards did not work he must of course fall back on Bengal and the Punjab. Sikander endeavoured, with how much success, I do not know, to make him see the difficulties of the idea. From the press it appears that a Pakistan scheme with safeguards for nationals outside Pakistan has been strongly pressed by foreign committee of the Working Committee of the Muslim League under Abdulla Haroon.'[213]

The Viceroy made this note after his discussion with Sikander Hyat Khan on 2 February 1940, one day before the meeting of the working committee of the Muslim League. It is somewhat strange and incredible that the 'Note' of the conversation which Linlithgow had with Jinnah on 6 February 1940 does not mention anything about 'the Pakistan scheme' which had been discussed in the foreign committee of the Muslim League under Abdulla Haroon. How could Linlithgow remain silent over such an important measure as the Pakistan scheme and not discuss with Jinnah that which was discussed by the working committee of the Muslim League on 3 February 1940? The strangest point is that, for the first time since the outbreak of the war, Linlithgow asked Jinnah about his reaction to the grant of dominion status to India. In the earlier interviews this matter had never come up for discussion. In general terms, of course, the future constitution of India might have been discussed and Jinnah confessed on 6 February 1940 to Linlithgow that 'he was not yet able to let me have the considered views of his colleagues and himself' on the question of dominion status. While the Congress had been asking the government to define the war aims and to state its position in respect of dominion status and the matter had been discussed, especially with Gandhi, it is unbelievable but true that the matter was raised with Jinnah for the first time only on 6 February 1940.[214] Obviously, Linlithgow did not care to consult Jinnah on this issue because he felt it was of little significance to Jinnah, as the following dialogue between the two suggests. Paragraph 4 of the 'Note' of conversation records Linlithgow's position: 'I again put to him [Jinnah] the familiar arguments for formulating and publishing a constructive policy; and in the light of our discussion, he said he was disposed to think that it would be wise for his friends and himself to make public at any rate the outlines of their position in good time. I warned him that it would be a great mistake to think that responsible opinion in any circle at home would accept the view that to stand still, much less to go back in India was the right solution to our difficulties.'[215]

Three important conclusions can be drawn from the Viceroy's account of discussions with Jinnah. First, Jinnah was to provide a solution to the

difficulties faced by the British government and the Muslims. Second, a solution could be found or this could be facilitated not by opening up the constitutional issue again, but by formulating and presenting a well-considered 'constructive scheme'. Third, Jinnah agreed that he should 'make public the outlines of their position in good time'. What were the elements constituting the features of 'their position' which had been discussed in private and had been kept secret so far, which now had to be made public? With whom were they discussed? Would it be correct to say that Linlithgow was privy to these discussions and therefore he did not mention them in his 'Note'. This episode raises doubts about Linlithgow's intentions in not mentioning the partition scheme in the 'Note', because it is unlikely that this matter remained undiscussed. Why was Linlithgow so keen to maintain discreet silence on the partition question, so much so that he did not mention it in any of his letters or telegrams to the Secretary of State for India for well over a month? Several telegrams were exchanged between them every day but Linlithgow kept the Secretary of State uninformed for 40 days. Clearly he deliberately withheld information of this important development from the authorities at home. There must have been some significant reasons behind Linlithgow's behaviour. Perhaps he did not want it to appear to the Indians and the world at large that he was privy to the idea of partition. The dispatches from the Secretary of State for India show that Lord Zetland was averse to the idea of partition and his initial reaction was one of spontaneous hostility. Perhaps Linlithgow had had an inkling of Zetland's views and he kept to himself the information on the subject. Besides, it was highly probable that Linlithgow was responsible in a significant way for refashioning of the so-called 'constructive scheme' into the partition scheme of Jinnah. No doubt, vague talks and preliminary ideas were exchanged in private regarding partition much before 6 February 1940 by Jinnah and his friends, but without the active connivance, support and patronage of Linlithgow the partition scheme could not have been made public by Jinnah. Linlithgow wanted, it seems, to keep this fact as confidential as possible.

At least until 13 March 1940 Linlithgow kept his own counsel on this question. He informed the Secretary of State for India in his telegram of 16 March 1940 about his talks with Jinnah on 13 March:

> I asked him [Jinnah] whether he was yet able to let me know about his constructive proposals. He said nothing positive in reply but urged strongly that from the Muslim point of view and that of His Majesty's Government, given the development of the war and the growing feeling of solidarity in the Muslim world (though he did not exaggerate the importance of the external Muslim community in the Indian problem) there was much to be said for our getting together. Muslims could work with us only on basis of confidence

> and partnership. When we got to the stage of deciding what was next to be done in India the Muslims will be very ready to tell us the right answer. Meanwhile if we wished their definite and effective help we must not sell the pass behind their backs. If we could not improve on our present solution for the problem of India's constitutional development, he and his friends, would have no option but to fall back on some form of partition.[216]

So Jinnah spelt out first and foremost the imperative need of 'our getting together': the British and the Muslim League must come closer, work in confidence as partners so that the Muslims would be able to provide 'definite and effective help' during the war and remain as friends for mutual benefit in the future. Jinnah was explicit enough to ask for a most enduring relationship with the British. Linlithgow recorded: 'He [Jinnah] was quite prepared to contemplate the possibility that *we might have to stay here much longer than was anticipated for the job of keeping the ring'*[217](emphasis added). The refrain of Jinnah and the other Muslim leaders was the continuation of British rule as long as possible, and certainly until the problem of protection of Muslim interests was resolved to their satisfaction. Jinnah also pointed out during the discussion that Muslims had begun realizing that they were not a minority but a nation and that 'democracy for all India was impossible', since under a democratic government Muslims would be reduced to the position of vassals under a Hindu Raj.[218]

Lord Linlithgow must have been thrilled to have such an exposition of the Indian political situation. It was heartening to find that Muslims under Jinnah wanted the British rule to continue as long as possible. Moreover, most of Lord Linlithgow's wishes and aims seemed to be on the verge of being fulfilled. First, in the context of the above discussions it was obvious that the Congress demand for independence fell in so far as the Muslim League and the government insisted on a prior agreement between the parties to precede the eventual transfer of power to a responsible Indian political body. In this connection the partition scheme had opened up the possibility of a transfer of power to two political bodies. Second, the Congress claim to speak on behalf of India could not be accepted by the British government. Linlithgow could point a finger at the Congress and say that the attitude adopted by the Congress had been 'unreasonable'; that it did not take into account the aspirations of the Muslims and the princes, and the government was not prepared to force them to accept a constitution against their will. As for the immediate prospect of Congress returning to office in the provinces, the chances seemed remote with the threat administered by Jinnah, and that suited the government admirably.

Linlithgow referred to the Ramgarh Congress resolution of 20 March 1940 and the Lahore resolution of the Muslim League of 23 March 1940

in his private letter of 25 March 1940 to Zetland without commenting on them. He said he would send 'his appreciation' of the 'important developments' after a week or so by which time he expected to receive the reactions of the Governors of various provinces. On 6 April 1940 Linlithgow wrote to Lord Zetland expressing his view of the 'more important resolution' of the Muslim League:

> I am myself disposed to regard Jinnah's partition scheme as very largely in the nature of bargaining. I think he has put forward the scheme, the many objections to which I need not set out here, partly to dispose of the reproach that the Muslims had no constructive scheme of their own; partly to offset the extreme Congress claim to independence; and the Congress contention that the Congress is the mouthpiece of India; and that a Constituent Assembly on the basis of adult suffrage is the only machinery of deciding future progress as put forward in the Ramgarh Resolution. That many Muslims are unhappy about the partition scheme, I have no doubt more particularly of the minority provinces . . .'[219]

He was fortified in his opinion by his governors, most of whom believed that Jinnah's partition scheme was 'bargaining in character'.[220] Yet what was Jinnah bargaining for? He did not change his stand regarding partition, or Pakistan, as it came to be known later, and he prefaced all his negotiations by saying that unless the parties – whether the government or the Congress – agreed in principle to the Pakistan idea there would be no further talks. Most negotiations ended without any agreement because, whatever concession was agreed to, Jinnah continued with his demand for Pakistan and insisted that Muslims would fight for it with all their might.

It was a ploy of Linlithgow to mollify Zetland's feelings. His somewhat curious observation to Zetland may be noted: 'Jinnah's scheme has I suspect largely been provoked by the unreasonable demand of the Congress' and that 'any condemnation of Jinnah's scheme will at once irritate Muslim feeling and would be seized on by the congress . . . I think it is preferable to quote it as illustrating the extent to which the gulf had widened between the parties and take the line that His Majesty's Government attached all the more importance in such circumstances to reaching a solution with an agreement of all parties which would secure the unity of India.'[221] Linlithgow proved to be a master in the art of duplicity and deceit, often called 'diplomacy' or 'strategy' by the die-hards ruling India. Linlithgow, in all probability, connived at the refashioning of the partition scheme in consultation with Jinnah and prodded him to make it public; when it was actually made public, he underplayed it by saying that it was nothing but a bargaining exercise on the part of Jinnah, and in the end blamed the Congress for the catastrophe declaring at the same time that the government's effort would

continue to be directed towards maintaining the unity of India! It is not clear, however, how the Congress demand for a declaration of war aims, or the calls for independence or the grant of dominion status had 'provoked' Jinnah to ask for partition.

Lord Zetland, the Secretary of State for India, reacted strongly against the partition idea, as Linlithgow had known he would be so; hence he had withheld information on the partition scheme when Jinnah first mooted it on 6 February 1940 in his interview with Linlithgow. On 4 April 1940 Zetland informed the Viceroy in a personal telegram that he proposed to raise the partition issue on 18 April 1940 during the India debate in the House of Lords: 'In particular I must make the debate the occasion for pouring cold water on the Muslim idea of partition formally advocated in the Lahore resolution though not necessarily at this stage conclusively reject it. I should emphasize that this would be a counsel of despair and not only at variance with the policy of a united India which British rule has achieved and which is our aim to perpetuate after British rule ceases.'[222] Zetland then sent a long letter on 5 April 1940 expressing his grave fears about the partition scheme. He wrote:

> I shall be bound to express my dissent for the proposals which have been recently put forward by All India Muslim League in the course of their recent conference at Lahore. I should very much doubt whether they have been properly thought out and in any case to create a number of Ulsters in India would not only mean the wrecking of all that we have been working for for a number of years past; but would also I would imagine give rise to the most violent opposition by the Congress of India. There is of course great force in Jinnah's argument that the circumstances are unsuited to the form of democracy which we have evolved in this country... The fundamental difference between the Muslims and the Hindus is certainly a much greater obstacle in the way of smooth working of a democratic system. But nothing appears to have been said in the resolution of the All India Muslim League on which they shall have their constitutional policy about the form of government in the units are to be created in those parts of India which are inhabited mainly by Muslims or in the units which lie outside the Muslim sphere of influence. Is it not intended that as is the case, for example of the Punjab and of Bengal the form of government in the units should continue to be a democratic character.'[223]

Zetland had demolished Jinnah's argument for his partition scheme for India.

Linlithgow was obviously quite nervous when he received Zetland's communications. He sent a telegram on 8 April emphasizing

> the great importance of saying nothing which will antagonise the Muslims and avoiding any direct attack on them... I am confirmed by enquiries I have made here in my feeling that any over-emphasis on unacceptability and faults of the Muslim scheme will be particularly unfortunate. We have after all made it clear already that the whole scheme and policy of the Act is open to consideration at the end of the war, and we cannot exclude the possibility that something of the nature of the Muslim scheme would then be put forward and possibly strongly pressed. We cannot well rule out any proposition of this nature in advance, and I think you will probably feel with me that wise tactics would be to keep our hands free until critical moment is reached in future constitutional discussions and we can make clear our true attitude towards it in the light of circumstances then prevailing.'[224]

From the above discussion with Zetland it becomes pretty clear that Linlithgow's earlier argument that Jinnah's partition plan was merely a 'bargaining' exercise and that its importance was ephemeral was not correct. Linlithgow could not rule out the possibility that the demand for Pakistan by Jinnah was a serious one which would need statesmanship of a high order by the government to deal with. Furthermore, Linlithgow's oft-repeated concern not to hurt or irritate Muslim feeling showed the depth of his commitment to the Muslim cause. He warned Zetland that his criticism of the partition scheme would be 'unfortunate' and that he must desist from it so as not to 'antagonize' the Muslims. Finally, Linlithgow appealed to Zetland, 'I would urge most strongly that no suggestion or reference to British rule in India ceasing should be made. The effect... will be deplorable...'[225]

Possibly Linlithgow felt that by cementing bonds of friendliness with Muslims he would contribute to prolonging British rule for at least 30–50 years. Zetland continued to express his misgivings about the entire business of partitioning India. He wrote to Linlithgow on 24 April 1940:

> The die-hards over here are secretly delighted at the widening of the gulf between the Muslims and Hindus, but taking a long view I should myself doubt very much if a cleavage between the Muslims and the Hindus is as fundamental as that contemplated by the present leaders of the All India Muslim League would prove to be, be to our advantage. The Hindus have no particular affiliations outside India, whereas the call of Islam is one which transcends the bounds of the country...'[226]

Zetland's ideas were, however, of little consequence because in May 1940 Winston Churchill took over from Neville Chamberlain the prime

ministership, and appointed Leo Amery as the Secretary of State for India in place of Lord Zetland.

The new Secretary of State for India, Leopold Amery, tried to impress on the Viceroy the necessity of reopening the dialogue with Jinnah and Gandhi, while the Viceroy thought it 'inexpedient at present'.[227] Yet Amery made a brave statement in Parliament in reply to a question on 18 May 1940: 'We regard the early attainment by India of a free and equal partnership in the British Commonwealth as the natural goal of our policy.' But not without a rider: 'We recognize as my predecessor made clear in his speech of 18 April that it is for the Indians themselves to play a vital part in devising the constitution best adapted to Indian conditions and in India's outlook.'[228] A couple of months later, on 8 August 1940, Amery made a statement in the House of Commons based on the Governor-General's communiqué, clearly giving the minorities an edge in the constitution-making over and above the Congress. The statement read: 'As to the position of minorities in relation to any future constitution scheme . . . full weight should be given to the views of minorities.' And further: 'It goes without saying that they [HMG] could not contemplate transfer of their present responsibilities for the peace and welfare of India to any system of government whose authority is directly denied by large and powerful elements in India's national life. Nor could they be party to the coercion of such elements into submission to such a government.'[229] Jinnah's stand was thus fully vindicated by the clear support given by the government.

During this phase of intense political manoeuvring British relations with Jinnah and the Muslim League seemed to have stabilized. Throughout the initial stages of the war Linlithgow maintained a semblance of dialogue with the Congress, making the issues as intractable as ever. At the same time, he encouraged Jinnah to put forward his demands, implicitly supporting them at the most crucial stages of the prosecution of war. The Indian National Congress was slowly but surely driven into the wilderness, becoming more and more hostile to the British, and launching the Quit India Movement, thus reaching a point of no return. The Labour initiatives of 1939–40, responsive to Congress demands of self-government and freedom, were frustrated by Linlithgow in India and the Conservative-led government in Britain. The demand for Pakistan by Jinnah transformed the collective consciousness of Indian Muslims, changing the nature of Indian politics and making negotiations more and more intractable. His uncompromising communal attitude, which was in some measure an outcome of implicit British support, proved fatal to any meaningful negotiations thereafter; Jinnah became more difficult and impossible to deal with. Linlithgow said to K.M. Munshi: 'but that is only from a short view of things. For the present he had made himself into a rallying centre of minorities. Time alone can remove him from that position. But from a long view of things

Jinnah cannot succeed. He would soon be found out as a stumbling block to progress.'[230]

Linlithgow's assessment proved to be only partially true. Though Jinnah may have proved to be a 'stumbling block to progress', he did not disappear from the scene.

Notes

1 The full text of the Viceroy's broadcast is available in encl. 3, Linlithgow to SOS, 5 September 1939, Linlithgow Papers, Mss. Eur. F. 125/8, p. 103.
2 Interview with Jinnah, 4 September 1939, para 2, ibid., p. 101.
3 Harold Wilson, *A Prime Minister on Prime Ministers* (London: 1977), p. 275.
4 Martin Gilbert, *Road to Victory, Winston S. Churchill, 1941–1945* (London: 1986), p. 254.
5 R.J. Moore, *Churchill, Cripps and India, 1939–1945* (Oxford: 1979), p. 44.
6 Martin Gilbert, *Road to Victory*, op. cit., p. 254.
7 PM's personal minutes M(A)2, 13 December 1945, Martin Gilbert, *Road to Victory*, p. 5.
8 Quoted in Moore, *Churchill, Cripps and India*, p. 29 (Churchill to Chamberlain, 20 February 1940).
9 Cabinet minutes, 26 February 1940, quoted in *The Empire at Bay: The Leo Amery Diaries, 1929–1945*, eds John Barnes and David Nichols (London: 1988), p. 605 (hereafter *The Leo Amery Diaries*).
10 Linlithgow to Wavell, 19 October 1943, Wavell, *The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 33.
11 *The Leo Amery Diaries*, diary entry, 14 April 1943, p. 881.
12 Ibid., 7 April 1943, p. 881.
13 See foreword by Lord Stockton, *The Leo Amery Diaries*, p. xi.
14 *The Leo Amery Diaries*, 12 July 1940, p. 632.
15 Ibid., p. 838.
16 Ibid., p. 842; Sir John Anderson was formerly Governor of Bengal 1932–37, and was Lord Privy Seal in Churchill's War Cabinet.
17 William Manchester, *The Last Lion: Winston Spencer Churchill: Visions of Glory 1874–1932* (London: 1973), pp. 831–2.
18 Ibid., p. 841.
19 *The Leo Amery Diaries*, p. 50.
20 Ibid., introduction, pp. 10–11.
21 Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill: The Wilderness Years 1929–1935*, Documents V, part 2 (London: 1981), p. 233, f.n. 1.
22 Ibid., p. 229.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid., p. 230. Sir Francis Younghusband (1863–1942), author and explorer of Central Asia, was Commr Tibet 1902–04, and Resident of Kashmir 1906–09.
25 Ibid., p. 298, emphasis added.
26 Speech at the Indian Empire Society meeting quoted in Manchester, *The Last Lion*, p. 849.
27 *The Leo Amery Diaries*, p. 852.
28 Ibid.
29 Wavell, *The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 23. Herbert Morrison (1888–1965) was Labour MP 1923–24; Minister of Supply 1940; Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security 1940–45; Lord Privy Seal 1945–51; Foreign Secretary 1951.
30 Gilbert, *The Wilderness Years*, p. 280, f.n. 1.

31 Wavell, *The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 23.
32 *The Leo Amery Diaries*, 7 February 1943, p. 872.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid., p. 859.
35 Ibid., 14 October 1943, p. 947.
36 Ibid., pp. 1047–8.
37 Ibid., p. 1048.
38 Katherine Mayo, born Pennsylvania, USA; author of *The Isle of Fear: An Examination of the US Rule in the Philippines* (1925); her books on India are *Mother India* (London: 1927), *Slaves of the Gods* (New York: 1929), *Volume Two* (1931) and *The Face of Mother India* (London: 1935).
39 Manchester, *The Last Lion*, pp. 842–3.
40 Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill, The Exchequer Years 1922–1929*, Documents V, part I (London: 1979), p. 1042.
41 Ibid., p. 1054.
42 Katherine Mayo to Malcolm Hailey, 15 February 1926, 30 April 1931, Hailey Papers, Mss. Eur. E. 220/9A; Hailey to Mayo, 10 January 1932, Mss. Eur. 220/23.
43 Beverley Nichols, *Verdict on India* (London and Bombay: 1944).
44 See Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill, Road to Victory, 1941–1945*, p. 1232.
45 Viceroy's interview with Jinnah, 4 September 1939, para 10, Linlithgow Papers, Mss. Eur. F. 125/8, p. 102, emphasis added.
46 Earl Attlee, *Empire into Commonwealth* (London: 1961), p. 36 .
47 Zetland to Linlithgow, 19/20 September 1939, Linlithgow Papers, Mss. Eur. F. 125/8, p. 79.
48 Linlithgow's interview with Jinnah, 4 September 1939, Linlithgow to Zetland, 5 September 1939, para 9, Linlithgow Papers, Mss. Eur. F. 125/8, p. 102.
49 Linlithgow to Zetland, 21 September 1939, telegram 269, para 2, Linlithgow Papers, Mss. Eur. F. 125/18, p. 154.
50 John Glendevon, *The Viceroy at Bay: Lord Linlithgow in India 1936–1943* (London: 1971), p. 196.
51 Durga Das, *India from Curzon*, p. 199.
52 Wavell, *The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 33.
53 Durga Das, *India from Curzon*, p. 208.
54 Wavell, *The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 120.
55 Earl Attlee, *Empire into Commonwealth*, pp. 35–6.
56 Ibid., p. 36.
57 Zetland to Linlithgow, 16 October 1939, para 3, Linlithgow Papers, Mss. Eur. F. 125/8, p. 25.
58 V. to SOS, tel. 310, 28 September 1939, para 12, Linlithgow Papers, Mss. Eur. F. 125/18, p. 195.
59 Ibid., para 13, p. 195.
60 V. to SOS, tel. 335, 7 October 1939, Linlithgow Papers, Mss. Eur. F. 125/18, p. 208.
61 Ibid.
62 Ibid., para 3, p. 209.
63 Zetland to Linlithgow, 21 December 1939, para 17, Linlithgow Papers, Mss. Eur. F. 125/8, p. 167.
64 Zetland to Linlithgow, 29 November 1939, para 3, Linlithgow Papers, Mss. Eur. F. 125/8, p. 140.
65 Jawaharlal Nehru, *Discovery of India*, op.cit., p. 370.
66 Ibid.
67 Moore, *Churchill, Cripps and India*, p. 4.

68 Zetland to Linlithgow, 22 November 1939. The text of the Cripps proposals is available in the encl., Linlithgow Papers, Mss. Eur. F. 125/8, pp. 144–50.
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81 The quotes are from V. to SOS, 21 September 1939, tel. 269, paras 16, 17, Linlithgow Papers, Mss. Eur. F. 125/18.
82 V. to SOS, 19 September 1939, tel. 253, Linlithgow Papers, Mss. Eur. F. 125/18.
83 Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill: The Wilderness Years*, V, in an article in the *Daily Mail* of 30 June 1932, p. 447, f.n. 1.
84 *Parliamentary Debates, Commons, Official Report*, 351, 1938–39, p. 1864.
85 Ibid. Also see f.n. 93.
86 *The Indian Annual Register*, II July–December 1939, pp. 68–70.
87 *Parliamentary Debates, Commons*, 351, 1938–39, p. 1864.
88 Linlithgow to Zetland, 18 September 1939, para 4, Linlithgow Papers, Mss. Eur. F. 125/8. Linlithgow said: 'It is a tragedy in many ways that at a time such as this we should have in so important a position a doctrinaire like Nehru with his amateur knowledge of foreign politics and of the international situation.'
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90 Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill: The Wilderness Years*, V, p. 447, f.n. 1.
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4

THE PAKISTAN RESOLUTION AND GANDHI–JINNAH DIALOGUE

Jinnah's two-nation theory

Addressing the huge gathering assembled at the annual session of the All India Muslim League at Lahore on 23 March 1940, Jinnah observed:

> Musalmans are not a minority as it is commonly known and understood... Musalmans are a nation according to any definition of a nation and they must have their homelands, their territory and their state. We wish to live in peace and harmony with our neighbours as a free and independent people. We wish our people to develop to the fullest our spiritual, cultural, economic, social and political life in a way that we think best and in consonance with our own ideals and according to the genius of our people.'[1]

He went on to define his two-nation theory based on what he called the real nature of Islam and Hinduism:

> They are not religions in the strict sense of the word, but are, in fact, different and distinct social orders and it is a dream that the Hindus and Muslims can ever evolve a common nationality... The Hindu and Muslim belong to two different religions, philosophies, social customs and literature. They neither intermarry nor interdine together and indeed they belong to two different civilizations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions. Their aspects on life and of life are different. It is quite clear that Hindus and Musalmans derive their inspirations from different sources of history. They have different epics, their heroes are different, and they have different episodes. Very often the hero of one is a foe of the other and likewise their victories and defeats overlap. To yoke together two such nations under a single state, one as a numerical minority and the other as a majority must

> lead to growing discontent and final destruction of any fabric that may be so built up for the government of such a state.[2]

Jinnah postulated that there were two parallel cultural streams with divergent religions, traditions and social orders which hardly ever interacted; and if they did, they ended in conflict. Such a reading of India's past was a most biased one, being one-sided and very selective in approach. However, it moved the millions of his co-religionists, and the Pakistan idea, which it gave rise to, swept them off their feet, bringing them dreams of a promised homeland of their own. The impact of the speech should not be minimized. On 23 March 1940, the All India Muslim League passed the resolution, commonly known as Pakistan resolution, stating 'that no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principles, viz., that geographical contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted, with such territorial adjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the North-Western and Eastern zones in India, should be grouped to constitute "Independent States" in which the constituent units will be autonomous and sovereign.'[3] This landmark resolution proved to be a turning point in India's history.

The resolution further provided for mandatory safeguards for the minorities in the regional states and their units. Later, in July 1940, the Lahore resolution was supplemented by Jinnah's memorandum to Lord Linlithgow seeking the government's categorical assurance that no statement would be made by the British government which militated against the Pakistan resolution and no interim or final scheme of constitution would be made without the consent and approval of the Muslim League.

As late as 13 March 1940, Jinnah had spoken of 'some form of partition' in his discussion with Linlithgow. Having received an overwhelming response to the Pakistan resolution of 23 March 1940, he boasted that partition was a 'well considered' demand and they must have it. Addressing the 'Pakistan session' of the Punjab Muslim Students Federation on 2 March 1941 he declared, in aggressive tones, that Hindus had no business to stand against the Pakistan demand: 'We stand by the Lahore resolution . . . Our demand is not for Hindus because the Hindus never took the whole of India. It was the Muslims who took India and ruled for 700 years. It was the British who took India from the Musalmans. So we are not asking the Hindus to give us anything. Our demand is made to the British, who are in possession. It is utter nonsense to say that Muslims were Hindus at one time. These nonsensical arguments are advanced by their leaders.'[4]

Gandhi was shrewd enough to note before that Jinnah looked to the British for a settlement and hence negotiations with the Congress were

of not much consequence for Jinnah; Jinnah served as an ally of British imperialism and was favoured with rewards from the government at the most critical juncture of British rule in India, during the Second World War. When Gandhi pointed out that 90 per cent of Muslims in India were Hindu converts, he was not merely stating a historical fact but was also questioning the contention of Jinnah that Muslims were a nation, just because of their conversion to Islam. He went on to ask whether Indians could claim nationhood if they all converted to Islam. In other words, Gandhi rightly pointed out that a religious group did not necessarily become a nation because of its religious affiliation. He argued:

> The 'two nations' theory is an untruth. The vast majority of Muslims are converts to Islam or descendants of converts. They did not become a separate nation as soon as they became converts. A Bengali Muslim speaks the same tongue that a Bengali Hindu does, eats the same food, has the same amusements as his Hindu neighbour. They dress alike. I have often found it difficult to distinguish by outward sign between a Bengali Hindu and a Bengali Muslim. The same phenomenon is observable more or less in the South among the poor who constitute the masses of India. When I met Sir Ali Imam I did not know that he was not a Hindu. His speech, his dress, his manners, his food were the same as of the majority of Hindus in whose midst I found him. His name alone betrayed him. Not even that with Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah. For his name could be that of any Hindu. When I first met him I did not know that he was a Muslim. I came to know his religion when I had his full name given to me . . . The Hindu law of inheritance governs many Muslim groups. Sir Mahommed Iqbal used to speak with pride of his Brahamanical descent. Iqbal and Kitchleu are names common to Hindus and Muslims. Hindus and Muslims of India are not two nations. Those whom God has made one, man will never be able to divide.[5]

Gandhi took issue with Jinnah:

> he [Jinnah] says Hindus as such have nothing in common with Muslims. I make bold to say that he and those who think like him are rendering no service to Islam; they are misinterpreting the message inherent in the very word Islam. I say this because I feel deeply hurt over what is now going on in the name of the Muslim League. I shall be failing in my duty, if I did not warn the Muslims of India against the untruth that is being propagated among them. This warning is a duty because I have faithfully served them

> in their hour of need and because Hindu–Muslim unity has been and is my life's mission.[6]

It is ironic that another Muslim, a learned and truly devout Muslim, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, made an impassioned plea for an understanding and appreciation of India's past history and culture which formed the basis of Indian nationalism, in the Ramgarh session of the Indian National Congress during the same week of March 1940. He said:

> It was India's historic destiny that many human races and cultures and religions should flow to her, finding a home in her hospitable soil, and many a caravan should find rest here ... One of the last of these caravans following the footsteps of its predecessors was that of the followers of Islam. They came here and settled here for good. This led to the meeting of the culture currents of the two different races. Like the Ganga and Jamuna, they flowed for a while through separate courses, but nature's immutable law brought them together and joined them in a *sangam*. The fusion was a notable event in history ... Eleven hundred years of common history have enriched India with our common achievements. Our languages, our poetry, our literature, our culture, our art, our dress, our manners, and customs, the innumerable happenings of our daily life, everything bears the stamp of our joint endeavours. This joint wealth is the heritage of our common nationality and we do not want to leave it and go back to the time when this joint life had not begun ... The cast has now been moulded and destiny has set its seal upon it.[7]

Jinnah's obduracy in ignoring the evolution of a common Indo-Islamic tradition of interaction among multiple layers of society over centuries of living together is truly astonishing.

Jawaharlal Nehru, in *The Discovery of India*, wrote: 'Though outwardly there was diversity and infinite variety among our people, everywhere there was that tremendous impress of oneness, which had held all of us together for ages past, whatever political fate or misfortune has befallen us. The unity of India was no longer merely an intellectual conception for me; it was an emotional experience which overpowered me. That essential unity had been so powerful that no political division, no disaster or catastrophe, had been able to overcome it.'[8] This was the essence of the nationalist view of Indian culture. But cultural unity did not imply uniformity: it symbolized a broad view of life, a philosophy of life which transcended barriers of caste, community, religion and language. The unity among Indians was found above all in the realm of ideas and values, in common beliefs, attitudes and outlook on life, which were deeply embedded in the

consciousness of the people as a whole. The Indian ethos, the perceptions of the commonly shared experiences of ages, made Indians feel as one people, one nation, and belonging to one country that was India.

The strength of Indian culture lay in its capacity to assimilate. The history of India is replete with instances of cultural synthesis, which can be traced to remote times. Hinduism itself has been evolving over centuries. It is often considered a way of life. Popular Hinduism embraces several beliefs and practices, often contradictory to one another. Recent studies on India, notably by French scholars, have demonstrated that the spirit of the higher Sanskritic culture has been captured by the people as a whole, and that popular culture 'has become homogenous with the higher one'. In other words, Indian culture was not merely an upper-class affair, but had derived its sustenance and strength from all segments of the society. Indeed, the essential element of the teachings and philosophy of the epics have been enshrined in the legends and folklore and still vibrate in the memory of rural India giving a philosophical base to the ordering of their lives.

Another exponent of the nationalist view of culture has observed: 'It is customary for people to think of diversity as a disadvantage and therefore to seek to impose uniformity in the search for unity and strength. In India we have found that diversity is a source of strength, that the continuity of the Indian civilization for thirty centuries is itself due to its diversity, to its talent for absorbing new elements and tolerating differences. This is how India can have sixteen major languages and seven major religions and yet function effectively as one nation.'[9]

Several groups of people entered India as the Christian era advanced, and were integrated into Indian society and culture, adding lustre and vigour to it. Then the Muslims came. At first Islam seemed to pose a challenge to the indigenous civilization and to Hinduism. However, the Muslims made India their home. Many Hindus embraced the new faith and swelled their numbers. This led to social interaction and Muslims in turn imbibed the ethos of the land and assimilated it in their own idiom. In the arts – architecture, literature, philosophy, music, language – the twin systems and beliefs interacted and influenced each other. The Mughal period of Indian history truly represented synthesizing trends. As an impact of these forces, strong currents of socio-religious movements, such as the Bhakti movement, swept across the country. The teachings of Guru Nanak, Kabir, Mirabai, Chaitanya, Namdev and other great poet-saints reached every home in India irrespective of religious and caste differences. They preached the oneness of God, decried social divisions among people, attacked the rigidity of caste structures and other dogmatic and superstitious beliefs, and appealed to people to lead lives of purity imbibing the true spirit of religion. These social reform movements set in motion a new era of mutual understanding, religious tolerance and thus

transformed the social consciousness of the people, regenerating their spirit. Kabir was regarded as the most articulate poet of the combined traditions of Sufism and Vedanta. Both Sufism and the Bhakti movement have been regarded as powerful social movements leaving an impact of comraderie among all classes of Muslims and Hindus. Throughout their long and varied historical experience, the religious traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Islam and Sikhism did not necessarily come into conflict with each other except when politics dominated social relations.

It may be observed that differences of caste and religion in the traditional Indian society were accepted as facts of life, and people lived in peace and amity, respecting each other's faith and position in society. In the villages abundant goodwill existed among their inhabitants oblivious of caste and religious distinctions. Considerable social intercourse took place among them, and mutual relationships developed in their day-to-day life and in religious and social affairs. They shared the myths, legends and folklore of the land. They struggled together against odds. In times of stress and strain, they helped each other. Interdining and intercaste or intercommunal marriages were not common. But these were essentially modern and European phenomena. By and large, neither Hindus nor Muslims married out of their groups or class; in the case of Hindus they seldom went out of caste to marry.

Social conflicts undoubtedly marred the tranquil rural life from time to time, but the source of these conflicts could be traced to secular causes, to political interactions and economic disparities. We do not find evidence of numerous communal conflicts as witnessed during British rule in India. In the medieval era and before, no doubt, turmoils and upheavals occurred but they were the consequences of wars, movements of armies and internal conflicts arising out of rivalries between chieftains and principalities. We do not come across religious wars during these centuries. The medieval period of India was characterized by conquest and military rule, but not on the basis of religion. Battle lines were never drawn in the name of religion; the rulers were not required to invoke religious sanction for their rule.

Professor Mujeeb, in *The Indian Muslims*, brings out the nature and character of Muslim states in India succinctly: 'The Indian Muslim states were not secular but they were also not religious. They were governed by minorities ruling in their own interest; apart from the religious affiliation with the mass of the Muslims they could not even be called communal... The ruling minority of the Muslims was not a clan or a caste or a class; it remained a minority but its number kept on changing.'[10] The myth of Muslims being a ruling class is thus laid to rest. Besides, 'no Indian Muslim state was or aimed at being a theocracy. It was Islamic only in the sense that the ruler was a Muslim and the ruling party mainly Muslim.'[11] But, even then, they should be identified as Arabs, Turks, Afghans, Mughals or so rather than Muslims. As for 'religious sentiments' of Indian Muslims,

they were influenced more by 'righteous *ulama* and Sufis' and not by the official *ulama* and the state. 'The righteous *ulama* maintained reverence for the *shariah* by emphasizing the ethical ideals and the Sufis sought to discover and reveal the personal relationship between God and man. They accepted the distinction between Muslim and non-Muslim but not the policy of exploiting it for political purposes.'[12] The Muslim masses remained as distant from the corridors of power as the Hindus. Muslims as a community did not become a 'ruling class' by virtue of being under the rule of the Afghans, Arabs, Turks or Mughals, just as Hindus as a community did not become a ruling class under the Hindu empires of Ashoka, Guptas or in the Vijaynagar kingdom.

The process of nation-formation was rudely shaken with the conquest of India by the British. The British rule was characterized by contradictions. It played both a constructive role as well as a destructive one. While it helped in building a modern state, it established a system prone to promoting exploitative relationships. On the one hand, it served as a unifying force; on the other, it assiduously strove to widen the gulf and social cleavages which already existed among the different religious groups, castes, classes and communities in India. Indian society on the eve of the British conquest was a plural society. It was also essentially a feudal society, based on inequalities. Instead of weakening the hold of feudal classes over the rural populace, the British policy in India tended to strengthen it, as a consequence of which the people were exposed to exploitation. The British overpowered the entire subcontinent; established a uniform system of administration, laws and education; and built railways so that their commerce could penetrate every village in India. With the development of communications, the economy of the country was, to an extent, integrated. India was ruled by a civil service, supported by a modern and strong army, under one command. In the wake of the political, administrative and economic unity of India under British rule, a sense of oneness prevailed among people of different regions comprising diverse linguistic and religious communities. With the growth of English education they could converse and communicate with each other. By the end of the nineteenth century the English-educated classes began demanding political reforms for self-government.

The British were in India as rulers for nearly 200 years, but they lived as aliens; arrogant, they remained aloof from Indian society. They were a ruling class, India was a subject colony. The economy of India was subservient to British economic interests. The government was not development-oriented; its main function was the collection of revenues and maintenance of law and order. There was great discontent among the educated and professional classes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: the whole country was in a political and intellectual ferment. As a consequence of these developments and socio-economic

forces, new social classes, including middle classes, were formed which challenged the supremacy of the British government and the vested interests, the Indian feudal classes composed of upper-class Muslims and Hindus, which supported it. A new awakening and consciousness among the Indians began to take shape, and these groups organized themselves to demand reforms: that is how the Indian National Congress was founded in 1885. The Congress shed off its early hesitancy and organized a series of mass movements for attaining independence from British rule under its great leaders, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Subhas Chandra Bose, C. Rajagopalachari and many others from different provinces of British India.

The national movement threatened the foundations of British rule. As the struggle for freedom grew in strength and momentum, British policy sought to widen the social cleavages which existed in the country. A host of British authors and administrator-scholars emerged in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, who left a rich corpus of literature about Indian religions, languages, castes, peoples, tribes and other social groups. The main aim of these studies, however, was to expose the weaknesses of the Indian society and utilize them for their own interest. It is no coincidence that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a host of associations, based on sentiments of caste, religion and community, came into being in several parts of India. As political consciousness among the educated classes began to express itself in various ways, we notice that the British concern for the maintenance and protection of traditions of different religious groups, castes and communities became more and more pronounced. Between 1930 and 1932, when the Civil Disobedience Movement spread over the country, it is incredible but true that Governor Malcolm Hailey addressed the All India Jat Mahasabha, the Hindu Depressed Classes Association and the All India Kayastha Conference in 1930; the Aman Sabha, the Landholders' Convention in 1932; and the Zamindars' Association and the *taluqdars* of Rae Bareli in 1930. In 1906, two decades after the formation of the Indian National Congress, the Muslim League was formed; it was followed by the Hindu Mahasabha and later the Akali Dal of the Sikhs, each claiming a separate identity for its constituents. With the introduction of the system of separate electorates and a form of government which professed to safeguard and promote the interests of sectional, communal and religious groups, Indian politics became more complicated. Seats were reserved for Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Anglo-Indians and Indian Christians in the legislatures, municipal boards and corporations. Later, in 1932, the communal award granted separate representation to the Depressed Classes. These developments tended to threaten the unity of the Indian people; acute differences among Indians surfaced and had a disastrous impact during this phase of British rule in India.

Jinnah did not realize that the Indian world-view transcended religious and cultural identities without destroying them, and symbolized an underlying unity, both civilizational and cultural. The unity of India was as fundamental as the plurality itself. That is why, in the context of India's cultural heritage, it was inaccurate to define the concept of Indian nationalism in religious terms. Neither Hindus nor Muslims were monolithic entities, they could not be appreciated as nations. Jinnah said to a Muslim audience in 1941 that 'three years ago they were a crowd; and today they are a nation',[13] as if he created a nation by waving a magic wand. This was, to say the least, an exaggeration if not an absurdity. It is true that a sense of religious solidarity existed among the Muslims, generating a sort of communal sense of the feeling of otherness against the non-believers. The Khilafat movement was born out of pan-Islamic urges as well as religious solidarity among Muslims. Pan-Islamic trends seemed more dominant among them than a sense of Muslim nationalism at this phase of the movement. Islam itself stands for a universal community of believers, *ummah*, rather than concerning itself with a nationalist ideology. Yet Muslims were moved as a religious community when they were made to feel that 'Islam was in danger', as Jinnah had succeeded in doing. But this was possible because of the intervention of the colonial state which created the conditions for the transformation of religious consciousness into communal consciousness, Jinnah becoming the instrument for the accentuation of such a process.

Speaking to the Aligarh University Students Union on 10 March 1941, Jinnah repeated his arguments: 'As a matter of fact, Pakistan has been there for centuries; it is there today, and it will remain until the end of the world. [cheers] It was taken away from us; we have only to take it back. What is the title of Hindus to it?' He went on to warn the students about Islam being in danger if Pakistan was not achieved: 'Pakistan is not only a practical goal but the only goal if you want to save Islam from complete annihilation in this country . . . Pakistan is there but we have to take it.'[14] In the same provocative vein he wanted them to serve Islam: 'Aligarh is the arsenal of Muslim India and you are its best soldiers.'[15]

Exhorting youngsters to rise and organize themselves, he observed: 'We are a nation. And a nation must have a territory. What is the use of merely saying that we are a nation? Nation does not live in the air. It lives on the land and it must have territorial state and that is what we want to get . . . Remember it is not a small job. It is the biggest job you have undertaken in your life since the fall of the Moghul Empire.'[16] This was Jinnah's presidential address at the special Pakistan session of the Punjab Muslim Students federation on 2 March 1941.

Jinnah often observed that Indian unity was a sham. When was India one that its 'vivisection' would be a tragedy, he asked. According to him Indian unity was an artificial creation of the British. It was forged under

the British through 'British bayonets', and after their departure India would disintegrate. Such arguments were also put forward by Winston Churchill: India would relapse into 'barbarism' and 'internecine wars' which were characteristic of India's past, he said. Jinnah's sense of pride and self-respect was not hurt when Churchill referred to the 'barbaric' rule of earlier centuries. Jinnah ignored the fact that, nearly 500 years before the dawn of the Christian era, Emperor Ashoka had united the whole of India, extending the frontiers of his empire beyond Hindukush and spreading the message of love and compassion and Buddhism throughout India. The ancient law-givers had propounded many tenets of law which are in observance even in modern times. Under the Mughals the administration of law and justice had stirred the imagination of the people of the entire subcontinent. Under the Mughals, Hindus played a vital role in all fields of administration; in the domain of war and peace and maintenance of law and order and growth of economy of the land. That the British courts alone were efficacious and imparted equal justice to all is an over-simplification of the British legal system.

Adi Shankaracharya travelled from Kerala to Kashmir and to the East and the West and established centres of pilgrimage at Badrinath in the Himalayas, at Puri in the east, Dwarka in Gujarat and Rameswaram in the Cape Comorin declaring that Hindus should go on pilgrimage to all these places of worship at least once in their life time. During the past millennia, millions of Hindus travelled unhindered by kingdoms and empires, whether Hindu, Rajput, Muslim or Maratha. No passports were needed, nor any permission required to move to these distant places. The continual journeys and travels of millions of pilgrims from one part of India to the other involved the carrying of trade and commerce along with their cultural and religious symbols. These movements involved the setting of linkages with others. They involved the exchange of ideas, languages, manners and customs of the travellers and the people inhabiting those parts of India they visited. It is known that the *hundis* of Jagat Seth of Bengal of the pre-Plassey and post-Plassey fame became operational within a month of their issue in as distant places as Lahore in the Punjab and Madras in the South. This was much before the postal system inaugurated by the British in 1854. Distant parts of India were joined through a network of roads and national highways. There were hundreds of roads connecting centres of trade and commerce with the capital cities of kingdoms and principalities before the arrival of the British as traders. Surely a strong current of unity prevailed in the whole subcontinent much before the British entered India. The kings and satraps differed for political and economic reasons and did not unite against the common enemy.

Mohammad Ali Jinnahbhai's marriage party proceeded to his village of birth, Paneli in Gondal state, on bullock carts, after crossing the sea from

Karachi to Verawal in Gujarat.[17] That was in 1892 when Jinnah was 16 years old. The great railway system of the British had not yet penetrated these areas. It is estimated by economists that in pre-independence India more goods and commodities were transported by bullock carts than by the railways and motor transport combined. Millions of tons of grain, cotton and manufactured goods were transported by flotillas of boats and by thousands of bullock carts running along the length and the breadth of the country. These commercial and trading contacts surely promoted give and take among the vast concourse of people collected in *hats* and markets. Incidentally, the villages were not merely subsistence-economy villages, nor were they backwaters of Indian civilization, as Marx had remarked. They became somewhat uneconomical during the British system of land-revenue management owing to over-assessment and the repressive collecting machinery employed. But then that is another story. Both in physical setting and cultural spread there was an imprint of unity over-arching social, economic and geographical space in India.

Jinnah's understanding of Indian history was as selective and poor as that of the British ruling class. Jinnah was not a well-read man. He was not a religious leader either. His entire lifestyle was European; his belief system was more Western than Islamic; and he was known to be a non-practising Muslim. His references to Islam and the history and culture of the Muslims sounded more like those of British rulers than an Indian man of letters. He believed, for instance, like Englishmen, that religion was 'the strongest and most important of the elements which go to constitute nationality'. It should be stressed that none of the European countries were products of religious beliefs or sentiments, nor did they cooperate with one another or come into conflict on grounds of religion. In fact religion hardly played a significant part in the formulation of their policies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. More secular concerns like trade, commerce and imperial interests appear to have been the rationale governing their motivations and policies. Yet, in spite of the benefit of historical experience, the British clung to the medieval concept of building a modern society based on religion. Instead of laying the foundation of a democratic polity following the territorial concept it was determined to promote communitarian and communal politics, thus laying the seeds of discord and dissension in India. Incidentally, the later emergence of Bangladesh as a separate independent nation-state, torn away from Pakistan, proved that religion alone was not a strong factor in the formation of a nation-state.

Sir William Hunter's book *The Indian Musalmans*, published in the 1870s, dealt mainly with the causes of discontent among Muslims. He sought to show that the Muslim aristocracy, who 'were conquerors, and claimed as such the monopoly of Government, had lost their power, wealth and influence under British rule'. Their 'sources of wealth' had run dry.

He identified three great sources of income: 'imperial taxes, police and law courts and army'. He advocated giving the Muslim aristocracy their lost power and providing avenues for rehabilitation. Most of the landed classes, especially after the 1880s or so, were composed of Muslim *taluqdars* and *zamindars* in UP and other parts of British India. The Muslim League was essentially a feudal organization dominated by, according to the Muslim League leader Khaliquzzaman, 'the titled gentry, Nawabs, Landlords and jee huzoors'. Jinnah called them 'flunkeys and toadies' and began organizing Muslims through fear of Hindu domination and fear of annihilation of their culture and religion. The Muslim masses were nowhere in the picture until the call of Pakistan swayed them and they began coming under the banner of the Muslim League, when the slogan 'Islam in danger' rent the air. Not before that: in 1937 the Muslim League had fared miserably in the provincial elections.

There was identity of interest between Jinnah's Muslim League and the British. There was a great deal of affinity between them regarding their approach to politics and hence a similarity in interpretations of the history and culture of Muslims. Malcolm Hailey, while delivering the convocation address to the Aligarh Muslim University on 25 January 1930, declared:

> Aligarh is a vital and essential feature in the life of Islamic India . . . Great as may be the importance to Muslims of attempting a satisfactory solution of their political ambition, even greater is the necessity of adjusting themselves to much of the changes which the new force among which we now move are likely to have on Muslim life and civilization. Your religious life is the soul of your culture; that is a truth more profound in your case than in that of many others of the world's peoples.
>
> What will be the reaction of those new and rapidly intensifying forces on your religion? How will it affect the social institutions which are so intimately connected with religion itself? You have a philosophy and literature of your own, which is a part of the life of your community and which may lend shape and colour from its environment but will they so affect it as to deprive it of its distinctive character?[18]

He promised to pray and play the role of a 'real friend of Muslims' for the 'fruition' of their efforts. He exhorted them, using the language of Jinnah's speeches, to organize themselves since 'the very survival of the community was in danger'.[19]

As an arch-opponent of the Indian nationalist movement, Hailey had striven hard to organize a 'solid Muslim bloc' against the national upsurge led by the Indian National Congress. Much later, in 1959, he recalled that he had 'spent a long life in the service of imperialism' and had tried his best

to stem the tide of nationalist forces from enveloping the country but he failed; 'there is no parallel to the coordinated movement for home rule which spread so rapidly in British India', and in retrospect he acknowledged the existence of an 'underlying unity of India . . . which the partition might disturb but could not entirely disrupt'.[20] It is instructive, though amusing, that the hardliners like Lord Zetland believed: 'I shall myself doubt very much if a cleavage between the Muslims and Hindus is as fundamental as that contemplated by the present leaders of the All India Muslim League.'[21] Jinnah's discovery of an incompatibility between Hindus and Muslims was of recent origin. Harry Haig, the Governor of UP 1934–39, had observed that 'a coalition between the Muslim League and the Congress would have resolved the communal question'.[22] Jinnah's communalism was essentially a political weapon used for the acquisition of power.

It must be observed that Jinnah did not criticize Hinduism at any time; he attacked Hindus only for not accepting his demands or not accepting him as the sole spokesman of 'Muslim India'. His quarrel was with 'Hindu India', not Hinduism, and the bogey of Hindu domination, whether real or imaginary, was raised by him to mobilize the Muslims – to unite them for the political objective of acquiring a separate homeland where the Muslim League and its representatives could rule unhindered by anybody. The Muslim League's dominance had to be assured in the Muslim polity thus created.

Jinnah's knowledge of Hinduism was as inadequate as his knowledge of Islam. While he talked of Islamic religion and culture, he seldom ever enunciated the tenets of Islam for the benefit of his Muslim audience or for the purposes of mobilization of Muslims. He invoked the authority of the Prophet or tried to instil in them a fear of the 'Day of Judgement' only to promote the Pakistan idea. When he was criticized for opposing the establishment of a democratic form of government in India he replied that the Prophet had taught Muslims 13 centuries ago the concepts of brotherhood of man and equality, on which democracy is based. Muslims had nothing to learn or gain from the kind of democracy sought by the government among the majority and minority communities belonging to two different religious and cultural traditions in India. It is doubtful if Jinnah believed in the Day of Judgement.

'Any man who gave his vote to the opponent of the Muslim League', Jinnah thundered, 'must think of the ultimate consequence of his action in terms of the interests of the nation and the answers that he would be called upon to produce on the Day of Judgement.'[23] Another refrain in his speeches was that whoever voted against the candidates of the Muslim League was an enemy of Islam.[24] The nationalist Muslims, as distinct from the Muslim Leaguers, came in for Jinnah's offensive tirade. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was denounced by Jinnah for his steadfast adherence to the creed of Indian nationalism and the Congress ideology. The author of

the Vidya Mandir scheme of education was Dr Zakir Husain, who was denounced by Jinnah as a 'Quisling'.[25] Hakim Ajmal Khan once questioned his authority on Islam. He gave no answer to that but to his Muslim audience he said: 'I hope my reading of Qur'an is right.' But most people doubted whether he ever read the Qur'an. Few in Indian politics were recognized to be a more devout Muslim and an ardent nationalist than Maulana Azad. He was regarded as a Muslim, well-versed in Islamic law, religion and learning. He carried his imposing presence with humility and culture, which impressed one and all, including Lord Wavell, who said that Maulana Azad was a truer representative of Muslims than Jinnah. Jinnha's scurrilous jibes against him as the 'rashtrapati' (president) and the 'show boy of the Congress' were humiliating and offensive. But undaunted he repeated such remarks in public as well as to Maulana Azad in person and refused even to shake hands with him.

In the Muslim League meetings which Jinnah addressed so often he would repeat: 'If we fail to realize our duty, you will be reduced to the status of *sudras* (Hindu low caste) and Islam will be vanquished from India . . . I shall not allow Muslims to be slaves of Hindus.'[26] Invariably the cry of Allah-O-Akbar followed such outbursts from Jinnah. The refrain of his speeches continued to be 'Islam in danger' throughout 1941–46; Hindu domination would eventually destroy Muslim culture and Islam. A more strident note was struck by other Muslim Leaguers and followers in different parts of India. Muslim youths were asked to organize themselves 'to break Somnath' and finish 'idolatrous'[27] Hindus, and to close their ranks to banish 'the Bania–Brahman Raj'.[28] Such denunciations of the 'other' community were bound to create communal passions. They were repeated in assemblies and conferences, but the press was used for such campaigns. The mouthpieces of the Muslim League were *Dawn* and the *Star of India* published in English in Delhi and Calcutta respectively; Urdu newspapers like *Jung, Anjam, Manshoor*, published in Delhi; *Nawa-I-Waqt, Paisa Akhbar, Zanundar, Inquilab* in Lahore; *Hamdam* in Lucknow; and *Asre-Jadid* in Calcutta. There were also papers in Bengali and other provincial languages propagating the Muslim League point of view. Aligarh Muslim University continued to be the 'arsenal' of the Pakistan Movement.[29] Jinnah addressed the Aligarh Muslim University students at least once a year, if not more often after the passing of the Pakistan resolution in March 1940. Hundreds of students fanned across the villages preaching the 'ideology' of Pakistan, declaring the Muslim League as the defender of the faith. In addition, the campaigns invariably emphasized that 'Hindus would devour us', once 'the protective shadow of the British Raj was removed'. 'This was repeated all over India, seldom in history so few inspired so many with so little effort.'[30] In 1946, the notorious Pirpur Report was serialized in 32 articles in the *Dawn* and *Manshoor* under the title 'It Shall Never Happen Again'. It was well-known that allegations

against the Congress-run provinces were unfounded, exaggerated or false, yet the Pirpur Report ran through the Muslim press.

The making of a Muslim nation in India and the communalization of Indian politics went side by side. The role of Jinnah cannot be overestimated. Yet Jinnah was a non-practising Muslim. He took up the *sherwani* and *salwar* only in 1937 but later frowned at those who donned Western clothes. He had neither read the Qur'an fully, as all Muslims were encouraged to do, nor had he studied *shariah*. He did not even know how to offer prayer in the mosque, as he told K.L. Gauba. In 1943, a murderous attack was made on Jinnah by a Khaksar Punjabi Muslim. When he was asked the reason for the assault on the *Quaid-i-Azam*, the assassin pointed out that he had observed Jinnah at the Badshahi mosque in Lahore with his shoes on and that Jinnah was ignorant of Muslim behaviour and etiquette in the religious places of Muslims. He accused Jinnah of being a non-believer while asking Muslims to sacrifice for Islam and Muslim causes. This was sheer hypocrisy, he told the court.[31] Similarly Maulana Maududi, the Jamait-i-Islami leader, observed in 1943: 'From the League's *Quaid-i-Azam* down to the humblest leader there was none who could be credited with an Islamic outlook and who looked at the various problems from an Islamic point of view.'[32] The Muslim landowners or the lawyers who were the founders and flag-bearers of the Muslim League were not devout Muslims either. Far from it. The Muslim landed gentry and the titled aristocracy who helped the Muslim League with funds, were known for their un-Islamic way of life. The ill-gotten money acquired through illegal cesses and taxes from the poor peasantry in UP was squandered away on luxury. The peasantry was in a state of rebellion against them making common cause with Congress-led movements. Lord Wavell's impression of them was equally unfavourable.

Most authors with first-hand knowledge of the Muslim masses in the rural areas have pointed out that they seldom observed Islamic tenets strictly. They were also often 'influenced by the Hindu environment with its customs and tradition'. Of course this was a cause of worry for several Muslim reformers from Shah Waliullah downwards. Yet, Muslims and Hindus alike were rooted in customary rites and rituals, including superstitions and prejudices. This was true of the countryside of Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Assam, UP as well as of the Punjab, as several empirical studies have shown.

Malcolm Darling, who spent his entire life in the service of the Punjab, wrote: 'The peasantry, almost to a man, confess themselves of the one true God and of Muhammad his Prophet but in actual fact they are the servants of landlord, money-lender, and pir [religious leader]. All the way down the Indus from Hazara in the north to Sind in the south these three dominate men's fortunes; and though they are found in greater or less degree all over the province, nowhere are they so powerful.'[33]

The pirs were quite popular among both Hindus and the Muslims, but Jinnah assiduously sought their assistance for the Pakistan cause. Often he had denounced the *maulavis*, the pirs and the *ulama* during his earlier political career. But in the 1940s, and especially in 1945–47, Jinnah in his new incarnation tried to enlist the support of one and all, as long as they served his purpose. Some of the eminent pirs were Pir Sahib of Manki Sherif, Pir Jamat Ali Shah, Khwaja Nazimuddin of Taunsa Sherif and Mukhdun Raji Shah of Multan. These pirs led a life of piety and were influential. Hindus and Muslims visited them. They symbolized popular Islam and served as a bridge between different communities. Many of them were know to be Sufi saints. They were persuaded to advise the Muslims to vote for Pakistan, thus snapping the bonds of friendship and affection with Hindus. The same was true of the *ulama*. It seems that, to attract popular Muslim support, Khan Bahadur Iftikhar Husain Khan of Mamdot was described as Pir Mamdot Sherif; Malik Feroz Khan Noon as Pir of Darbar Sargodha Sherif; and Sardar Shaukat Hyat Khan as *Sajjada Nasthin* of Wah Sherif.[34] Once upon a time Jinnah used to say that politics was 'a gentleman's game', but no longer; the Muslim League under his command used every method to win support for the Pakistan idea. Religion had become a pawn in the game of politics. Unbridled rivalry for power destroyed the rich and fine mosaic of Indian cultural heritage built by centuries of interaction between the different communities of India. The resultant communalization of society and politics eventually led to the partition of India.

In daily life, however, the role of formal religion even in the traditional and agrarian culture of India was minimal. Prakash Tandon, in his intimate autobiographical memoirs, *Punjabi Century, 1857–1947*, records: 'There had never been much formal religion in our homes and villages anyway . . . Our home was not irreligious; we feared God and invoked his name, but there was no daily worship, ritual or much visible influence of religion on our daily life. We were only conscious of our religion at festivals and fasts, weddings, namings and death; and then only in a mechanical sort of way.' There was ample bonhomie and comraderie among people irrespective of difference of caste, creed or religion. Besakhi was a secular festival, the only one of its kind in which Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs all participated: 'Though celebrated both by town and country it was essentially a farmers' festival, a kind of thanks-giving . . .'[35] Everybody danced to the tune of Bhangra and Gidda (popular dance forms in the Punjab, the former for men and the latter for women) in gay abandon enjoying lavish hospitality and goodwill from all, so characteristic of Punjabi life. Besides, the Punjabi community was cemented by common bonds of language, values, food, dress, manners and culture, and above all a common outlook on life. It was true that among Muslims, owing to collective prayers offered on Fridays, the sense of community seemed

stronger and more widespread but it did not come in the way of *Punjabiat*. The same was true of Bengalis. The bonds of language and culture was so strong among them that they challenged the imposition of Urdu as the official language of Pakistan and launched a powerful movement against Punjabi domination in East Pakistan, leading to the formation of an independent Bangladesh in 1971.

When the spectre of partition loomed large Jinnah argued with Lord Mountbatten not to divide the Punjab and Bengal, since the Punjabis and Bengalis belonged to the same cultural space and they were 'nations'. Mountbatten told him that Indians, for similar reasons and on the same basis, could be regarded as belonging to 'a nation', and that it was Jinnah who had cast his web for the creation of Pakistan on the ground that Muslims were a separate nation. 'Who would believe you now unless you change your stand and accept the common nationhood for the whole of India?' Mountbatten asked Jinnah.[36] That was the tragedy of Jinnah. The two-nation theory of Jinnah was contrary to historical experience and facts of life. Jinnah's last-ditch stand regarding the Punjab and Bengal nailed the lie of his two-nation theory so assiduously advocated by him since March 1940.

Gandhi–Jinnah dialogue

Conceptually Jinnah's two-nation theory was flawed. The religious-based identity of Muslims as a community was only one aspect of their being. Nor was it historically accurate to claim that during 1,000 years of Muslim presence in India the different communities lived together but did not interact with each other, or that they lived in a hostile environment antagonistic to each other's interests. It is useful to examine the Gandhi–Jinnah talks held on the 18 days from 9 September to 27 September 1944 in Bombay. The talks revealed the contradictory and irrational attitude of Jinnah on issues of national identity, right of self-determination and democratic system of governance. The talks ultimately failed.

The exchange of ideas between the two leaders was of seminal importance for the future course of events. The discussions, recorded by Gandhi, and the correspondence between Jinnah and Gandhi seeking clarification and explanation on obscure points, have been published and are available for public scrutiny.[37]

First and foremost, Gandhi recorded that Jinnah 'drew an alluring picture of the Government of Pakistan. It would be a perfect democracy.'[38] Gandhi asked Jinnah how a democratic form of governance would work in Pakistan as he had publicly declared that 'democracy did not suit Indian conditions'. Jinnah denied having said that. When Gandhi produced the details of his statements, Jinnah tried to defend himself saying that was 'with regard to imposed democracy'.[39] Jinnah, with his legal background, tried to wriggle out of the situation.

Jinnah's statements had been very useful to the British; they made waves in the British media. Linlithgow normally flashed such information to the Secretary of State for India and Prime Minister Churchill, who would then go to the House of Commons reminding his countrymen how ridiculous it was to grant self-government to Indians when one hundred million Muslims did not want democracy. The US President would normally be informed as the British media enthusiastically reported Jinnah's observations.

The discussions on democracy naturally led to the question of minorities in a democratic set-up. Jinnah said that he was not talking of Muslims alone as a religious minority. So Gandhi wanted to know what would happen to the other minorities in Pakistan: the Sikhs, Christians and Depressed Classes. Jinnah coolly replied that 'they would be part of Pakistan'. When Gandhi asked him 'if he meant joint electorates', Jinnah said, 'Yes he would like them to be part of the whole.' Jinnah went on to explain 'the advantages of joint electorates, but if they wanted separate electorates they would have it'. It is significant to note that Jinnah was contradicting himself by opposing joint electorates in India but not in Pakistan. Why that should be so was not clarified by Jinnah but he was aware that there were 'advantages of joint electorates'[40] in a nationalist milieu and setting. His objection to the concept in this context would appear to be some kind of a double-speak on his part. With a view to placating the Sikhs, Jinnah said that they 'would have Gurumukhi if they wanted and the Pakistan Government would give them financial aid'.[41] When Jinnah became the Governor-General of Pakistan, he insisted, along with Liaquat Ali Khan, that Urdu become the official language of Pakistan. This move was resisted by the Bengalis who wanted Bengali as the official language of East Pakistan, but Jinnah would allow Bengali only as a second language in Bengal, Urdu being the first. Such an imposition was resisted by them and it laid the germs of a separate Bangladesh, independent and sovereign, totally alienated from Pakistan in spite of their being Muslims.

A second issue which came up for discussion was religion. Gandhi asked Jinnah in his letter of 15 September 1944: 'You do not claim to be a separate nation by right of conquest but by reason of acceptance of Islam. Will the two nations become one if the whole of India accepted Islam? . . . If India was one nation before the advent of Islam it must remain one in spite of the change of faith of a very large body of her children.'[42] Jinnah had no plausible answer to these questions.

Gandhi also asked Jinnah, if religion was the basis of differences with Hindus, what would happen to Jats and Christians in Pakistan. Gandhi recorded: 'he pooh-poohed the idea but later agreed that Jats could have separate existence if they wanted'. As for the Christians, Jinnah said 'that was a problem for the Hindus'. Gandhi inquired, 'if Christians were in a majority in Travancore and if Travancore was in Pakistan, how would

he solve the problem'. Jinnah said: 'he would give it to them'.[43] Obviously these were hypothetical questions and they did not affect Jinnah's demand for Pakistan, but they exposed the hollowness of the argument that religion was the basis of Pakistan. If it was the religious divide which transcended all other uniting elements, Gandhi was clever enough to raise this issue 'to prove from his [Jinnah's] own mouth that the whole of the Pakistan proposition is absurd', he confided to Rajagopalachari.[44]

To begin with, Jinnah wanted Gandhi to accept the Pakistan principle before discussing any other issue, including what was known as 'Rajaji's formula'.[45] Jinnah also asked Gandhi to initiate dialogue as a representative of the Hindus or the Hindu Congress, otherwise he queried the validity or usefulness of the talks. Jinnah having called him a Hindu and not an Indian, Gandhi felt humiliated but he remained calm.[46] Jinnah, of course, had been saying that he was a 'Musalman', and that he was proud to be the leader of the Muslim League which was the supreme organization of the Musalmans in India. Gandhi quietly argued that he was discussing with Jinnah as an individual and not as a representative of any organization. If he was convinced that his (Jinnah's) point of view was worthy of adoption in the national interest of India he would try his best to influence the Indian National Congress in its favour. Jinnah then seemed to have relented and told Gandhi: 'The Muslims want Pakistan. The League represents the Muslims and it wants separation.' Gandhi replied that he was prepared to accept that the League was the most powerful Muslim organisation, but it did not represent all Muslims and not all Muslims want Pakistan. Therefore the best course would be, Gandhi suggested, 'to put to vote all the inhabitants of the area' to determine if they wanted Pakistan. Jinnah asked why the non-Muslims should be asked for their opinion. This introduced the third issue, self-determination. Gandhi argued that while Punjab and Bengal were Muslim-majority provinces there were substantial minorities like Hindus, Sikhs and others. If the right of self-determination was to be exercised by the Muslims the same right, in principle, should not be denied to others.[47]

The right of self-determination was one of the trickiest matters to be resolved, so they devoted a considerable part of their talks to it. Jinnah insisted:

> We claim the right of self-determination as a nation and not as a territorial unit, and that we are entitled to exercise our inherent right as a Muslim nation, which is our birth right... Ours is a case of division and carving out of two independent sovereign states by way of settlement between two major nations, Hindus and Muslims and not of severance or secession from an existing union, which is non-existent in India. The right of self-determination which we claim postulates that we are a nation, and as such it would

> be the self-determination of the Musalmans, and they alone are entitled to exercise that right.[48]

Jinnah observed that Muslims and Hindus were 'two major nations' of India, so, if Hindus were also a 'nation' just as Muslims were, then why deny the same right of self-determination to them? As for the term 'inherent right', it could be applied with equal justification to Hindus as well. Jinnah was consistent in his argument only if it served to prove his point but, following the same logic and principle which governed his argument on self-determination, it would be considered absurd to deny it to others. That was the weakness of his argument, which he refused to recognize. This was one of the issues on which the talks broke down.

Jinnah also insisted that Gandhi should accept the Lahore resolution in full. Gandhi pointed out in his letter of 24 September 1944 to Jinnah that he was prepared to accept that the Muslim-majority areas of the North-West and Eastern zones could be separated to form separate states. He wrote to Jinnah:

> I proceed on the assumption that it is not to be regarded as two or more nations, but as one family consisting of many members of whom the Muslims living in the North-West Zone, i.e., Baluchistan, Sind, North-Western Frontier Province and that part of the Punjab where they are in absolute majority over all the other elements and in parts of Bengal and Assam where they are in absolute majority, desire to live in separation from the rest of India.'[49]

Gandhi also observed that, although he differed with Jinnah 'on the general basis' of Pakistan, he would still recommend to the Congress and the country the acceptance of the claim for separation contained in the Muslim League resolution of Lahore 1940, on the following terms:

> The areas should be demarcated by a commission, approved by the Congress and the League. The wishes of the inhabitants of the area should be ascertained through the votes of the adult population of the areas or through some equivalent method. If the vote is in favour of separation, it shall be agreed that these areas shall form a separate state as soon as possible after India is free from foreign domination and can therefore be constituted into two sovereign independent states.
>
> There shall be a treaty of separation which should also provide for the efficient and satisfactory administration of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Internal communications, Customs, Commerce, and the like which must necessarily continue to be matters of common

> interest between contracting parties...The treaty shall also contain terms for safeguarding the rights of minorities in the two states.[50]

This was a rational mode for arriving at a settlement. Within the terms of agreement various issues could be studied and solutions arrived at. Pakistan, both in principle and in concrete terms, was in effect accepted by Gandhi. The very area suggested by Gandhi became Pakistan: rivers of blood and a holocaust could have been avoided if Gandhi's solution, which was not at all intractable, had been accepted. But Jinnah was under the misapprehension that he would get more areas without a plebiscite with the connivance and support of the British government. That was the tragedy of Jinnah and the country. Jinnah declared in his letter of 25 September 1944 to Gandhi: 'If this term were accepted and given effect to the present boundaries of the present provinces will be maimed and mutilated beyond redemption and leave us only with the husk, and it is opposed to the Lahore Resolution.'[51]

Gandhi's ideas of partition, which he called 'a partition between two brothers if a division then must be'[52] was ridiculed by the British government. It was often remarked by British officials, including Lord Linlithgow and Lord Wavell, that as long as Gandhi lived there was no hope of any agreement. It was a deliberate attempt on their part to deride the salient features of the Rajaji formula – Gandhi's formula, as they called it – to keep the two parties apart. There was no doubt at all that the formula, as stated in clear terms by Gandhi, had all the makings of a great breakthrough between the Muslim League and the Congress. Even Jinnah was surprised at the cordiality of dialogue maintained during the period, but he suddenly became hostile and rejected the terms offered by Gandhi. Jinnah said that he did not understand what Gandhi meant by 'partition between two brothers' and asked for 'rough outlines of this new idea of yours, as to how and when the division is to take place and in what way it is different from the division envisaged by the Lahore Resolution'.[53] Gandhi was rather disturbed by Jinnah's insistence against permitting the people 'to express their opinion specifically on this single issue of division'. He asked Jinnah pointedly why he was so 'averse to a plebiscite'.[54]

The grounds for Jinnah's objection to Gandhi's formula were: first, 'that the right of self-determination will not be exercised by the Muslims but by the inhabitants of those areas so marked in the mutilated areas so defined'. Jinnah's negativism here is glaringly obvious. After all, the right of self-determination was offered to all inhabitants, Muslims included, but it was something he would not entertain unless only Muslims were asked to exercise their vote.

Second, Jinnah wanted a 'separate state' just before the British left India and not 'after India wins independence'.

Third, Jinnah was opposed to any idea of shared responsibility for foreign affairs, communications, commerce and such like. This violated the Lahore resolution: 'The matters which are the lifeblood of any state cannot be delegated to any central authority or government.'[55] It is said that, after the formation of Pakistan and during the last months of Jinnah's life, he wanted to enter into an agreement with India on matters of defence, etc. How far this is true is not known. However, it was too late, the partition holocaust had cast a shadow on the relations with India and there was hardly any room for mutual trust at that point in time. But Gandhi's formula did have the foundations for a better understanding if more attention had been paid to his offers and Jinnah had been persuaded to work out a solution of other outstanding issues like the nature of authority and machinery required to administer central subjects.[56] Gandhi had suggested that 'in practice there will have to be a body selected by both parties to regulate those things' but he did not visualize a central authority to take care of these matters. In any event that was a matter which could have been deliberated upon in good faith after they had agreed to form new independent states.

Jinnah declared that Gandhi's Rajaji formula was 'one calculated to completely torpedo the Pakistan demand of Muslim India'.[57] On 27 September 1944 Jinnah told the press: 'I have placed before him [Gandhi] everything and every aspect of the Muslim point of view in the course of our prolonged talks and correspondence, and discussed all the pros and cons generally, and I regret to say that I have failed in my task of converting Mr. Gandhi.'[58] According to Gandhi, the Rajaji formula had 'conceded the substance of the Lahore demand' and it was on the question of the two-nation theory 'we split'.[59] While conceding 'without the slightest reservation' the Pakistan demand, Gandhi pointed out 'if it means utterly independent sovereignty so that there is to be nothing in common between the two, I hold it as an impossible proposition'.[60]

In spite of flaws in the definition or the historical validity of the two-nation theory, Jinnah's powerful exposition of a separate history, culture, religion, race and ethnicity appealed first to the decayed Muslim nobility whose memories as conquerors of India had not faded. The Muslim landed aristocracy, followed by the educated classes and the professionals, that is the middle classes, were the next to appreciate Jinnah's advocacy of the Muslim 'nation's' glorious past, whose status, power and influence were being threatened by the spectre of the majority rule of the Hindus. Jinnah's frontal attack on Hindus and the Indian National Congress had won the sympathy of many Muslims. It was easy enough for him to galvanize the support of Muslims in general when he made an impassioned plea for the establishment of a separate homeland for Muslims – an independent sovereign state of Pakistan wherein their distinctive culture, customs and traditions, religion and philosophy of life would prevail; their

political ambition would be fulfilled; and they would rid themselves of the economic bondage of Hindus, who controlled the wealth and economy of India. The Muslim masses were swept off their feet by the promise of a political and economic utopia basking under the eternal glory of Islam.

Jinnah had emerged as the Defender of the Faith. No single individual had earned for himself such a position since the downfall of the Mughal empire. Not even the great social reformers like Shah Waliullah of Delhi (1703–62), Syed Ahmed Brelvi (1782–1831), Jamaluddin Afghani, who visited India with his Pan-Islamism (1879–82), or even Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, who founded the Aligarh Mohammedan College and laid the seeds of the Aligarh movement for the preservation of the separate identity of Muslims, could match the charismatic appeal of Jinnah, who was hailed as the best exponent of Muslim national identity. During the Gandhi–Jinnah dialogue, Jinnah wrote to Gandhi:

> We maintain and hold that Muslims and Hindus are two major nations by any definition or test of a nation. We are a nation of a hundred million, and what is more, we are a nation with our own distinctive culture and civilization, language and literature, art and architecture, names and nomenclature, sense of value and proportion, legal laws and moral codes, customs and traditions, aptitudes and ambitions; in short we have our own distinctive outlook on life and of life. By all canons of international law we are a nation.[61]

Hindus by no stretch of the imagination could be regarded as a nation, but the British fell in line with Jinnah's argument and eventually accepted his plea for Pakistan.

Notes

1 For the full text of Jinnah's speech delivered on 23 March 1940, see Pirzada, *Evolution of Pakistan*, pp. 340–62.
2 Ibid., pp. 359–60.
3 Ibid., p. 363. For the AIML resolution of 23 March 1940, see pp. 362–3.
4 Ahmed, *Some Recent Speeches and Writings of Mr Jinnah*, p. 217.
5 *CWMG*, no. 71, pp. 388–9, *Harijan*, 6 April 1940.
6 Ibid., p. 390.
7 Quoted in S.R. Mehrotra, 'The Congress and the Partition of India', *Towards India's Freedom and Partition* (Delhi: 1979), p. 207. For a lucid exposition of India's culture, see Maulana Azad, presidential address delivered at the Ramgarh Congress session, 19 March 1940, *The Indian Annual Register*, January–June 1940, p. 200.
8 Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, p. 39.
9 Indira Gandhi at Austrian Society for Foreign Policy and International Relations, Vienna, 28 October 1971, *Indira Gandhi: An Apostle of National Integration* (Delhi: 1985), p. 59.

10 M. Mujeeb, *The Indian Muslims* (London: 1967), p. 557.
11 Ibid., p. 556.
12 Ibid., p. 558.
13 Ahmed, *Some Recent Speeches and Writings of Mr Jinnah*, p. 228.
14 Ibid., p. 230.
15 Ibid., p. 231.
16 Ibid., p. 213.
17 Fatima Jinnah, *My Brother*, ed. Sharif Al Mujahid (Karachi: 1987), p. 523.
18 Quoted in John Cell, *Hailey: A Study in British Imperialism, 1872–1969* (Cambridge: 1992), address, 25 January 1930, pp. 164–5.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid., p. 301.
21 Zetland to Linlithgow, 14 April 1940, Linlithgow Papers, Mss. Eur. F. 125/9.
22 For Harry Haig's exposition on coalition government see Chapter 2.
23 Quoted in K.B. Sayeed, *Pakistan: The Formative Phase* 1857–1948 (London: 1968), p. 220.
24 Ibid.
25 Wavell, *The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 296. For Wavell's opinion of Maulana Azad, pp. 315, 361.
26 Sayeed, *Pakistan: The Formative Phase*, p. 215.
27 Ibid., p. 218.
28 Ibid., p. 221.
29 Jinnah's speech 10 March 1941, AMU students union, Ahmed, *Some Recent Speeches and Writings of Mr Jinnah*, p. 231.
30 Quoted by Mushirul Hasan from Kalim Siddiqui, *Conflict & War in Palestine* (Karachi: 1972), pp. 58–9. See Hasan's introduction in Hasan (ed.), *India Partitioned: The Other Face of Freedom* (New Delhi: 1985), pp. 21, 24.
31 Barrister-at-Law, *Jinnah Faces an Assassin* (Bombay: 1943), pp. 76, 86–7. Rafiq Sabir Mazangavi, a Khaksar, had attacked Jinnah on 26 July 1943.
32 Quoted in Sayeed, *Pakistan: The Formative Phase*, p. 216.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
35 Prakash Tandon, *Punjabi Century, 1857–1947* (London: 1961), pp. 26–7, 32, 57.
36 Lapierre's interview with Mountbatten, Larry Collins and Domnique Lapierre, *Mountbatten and the Partition of India* (New Delhi: 1982), pp. 43–4.
37 *CWMG*, no. 78, appendices III to XI, pp. 401–17 for Jinnah's letters to Gandhi; for Gandhi's letters to Jinnah and record of dialogue between the two, see *CWMG*, no. 78.
38 Gandhi–Jinnah talks, 12 September 1944, *CWMG*, no. 78, p. 96.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
41 Ibid.
42 Gandhi to Jinnah, 15 September 1944, *CWMG*, no. 78, p. 101.
43 Record of talk with Jinnah, 12 September 1944, ibid., p. 96.
44 Gandhi's discussion with Rajagopalachari, 12 September 1944, ibid., p. 97.
45 Record of talk with Jinnah, 9 September 1944, *CWMG*, no. 78, p. 88.
46 Ibid.
47 Ibid., p. 87.
48 Jinnah to Gandhi, 21 September 1944, ibid., pp. 410–11.
49 Gandhi to Jinnah, 24 September 1944, ibid., p. 126.
50 Ibid., pp. 126–7.
51 *CWMG*, 78, app. IX, pp. 413–14.

52 Gandhi to Jinnah, 22 September 1944, *CWMG*, no. 78, p. 122.
53 Jinnah to Gandhi, 23 September 1944, *CWMG*, no. 78, app. VIII, p. 412.
54 Gandhi to Jinnah, 22 September 1944, ibid., p. 122.
55 Jinnah to Gandhi, 25 September 1944, ibid., app. IX, p. 414. Gandhi had thought the subjects 'to be matter of common interest between the contracting parties', Gandhi to Jinnah, 24 September 1944, ibid., p. 127.
56 Jinnah to Gandhi, 25 September 1944, ibid.
57 Jinnah to Gandhi, 26 September 1944, ibid., app. XI, p. 417.
58 Jinnah' press statement, 27 September 1944, ibid., app. XII, p. 418.
59 Gandhi's interview to the press, 28 September 1944, *CWMG*, 78, pp. 138–9.
60 Ibid., p. 140.
61 Jinnah to Gandhi, 17 September 1944, app. VI, *CWMG*, no. 78, p. 407.

Illustration 1 Winston Churchill (19505) (No. 1991).

Illustration 2 Clement-Attlee (1953) only Attlee photo to be taken for publication (No. 1469).

Illustration 3 Indian Cabinet taking oath at office – 15 August 1947 (oft repeated photo No. 24987).

Illustration 4 Lord & Lady Mountbatten with Gandhi, 1947 (No. 21672).

Illustration 5 The Viceroy Lord Moutbatten discussing partition plan with leaders of the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League, 2 June 1947 (No. 24983). Clockwise seated are Lord Mountbatten, M.A. Jinnah, Liaquat Ali Khan, Abdul Rab Nishtar, Baldev Singh, J.B. Kripalani, Sardar Patel and Jawaharlal Nehru. Also sitting behind are Mieville and Lord Ismay.

Illustration 6 Jinnah with Cabinet mission members – Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Lord Alexander and Sir Stafford Cripps. Jinnah is seen shaking hands with the Viceroy Lord Wavell, 1946 (No. 24937).

Illustration 7 Gandhi with Lord Pethick-Lawrence, 1946 (No. 27884).

Illustration 8 Jinnah with members of British Parliamentary Delegation (Jan–Feb 1946) (No. 27954).

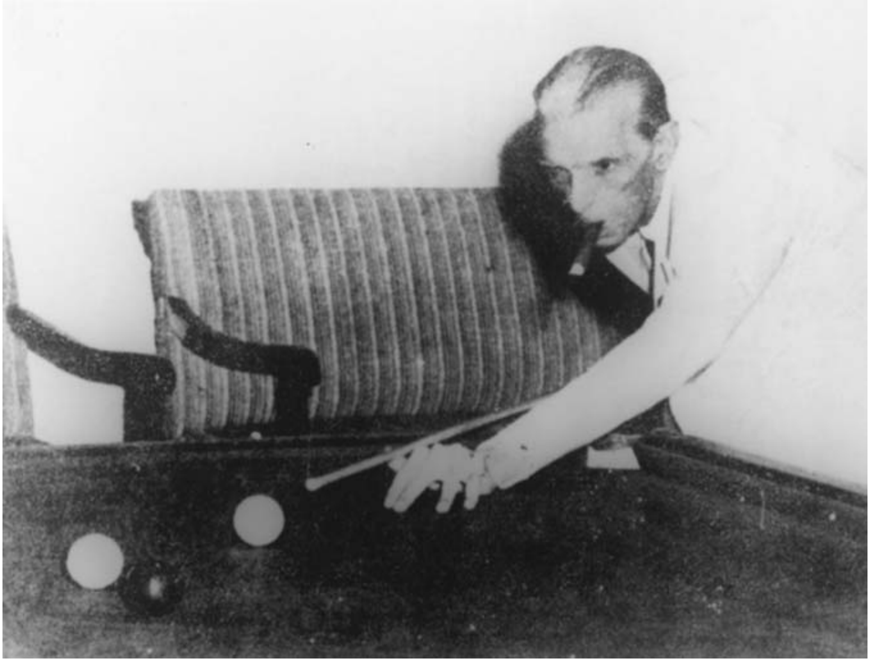

Illustration 9 Jinnah playing billiards, 1945 (No. 25705).

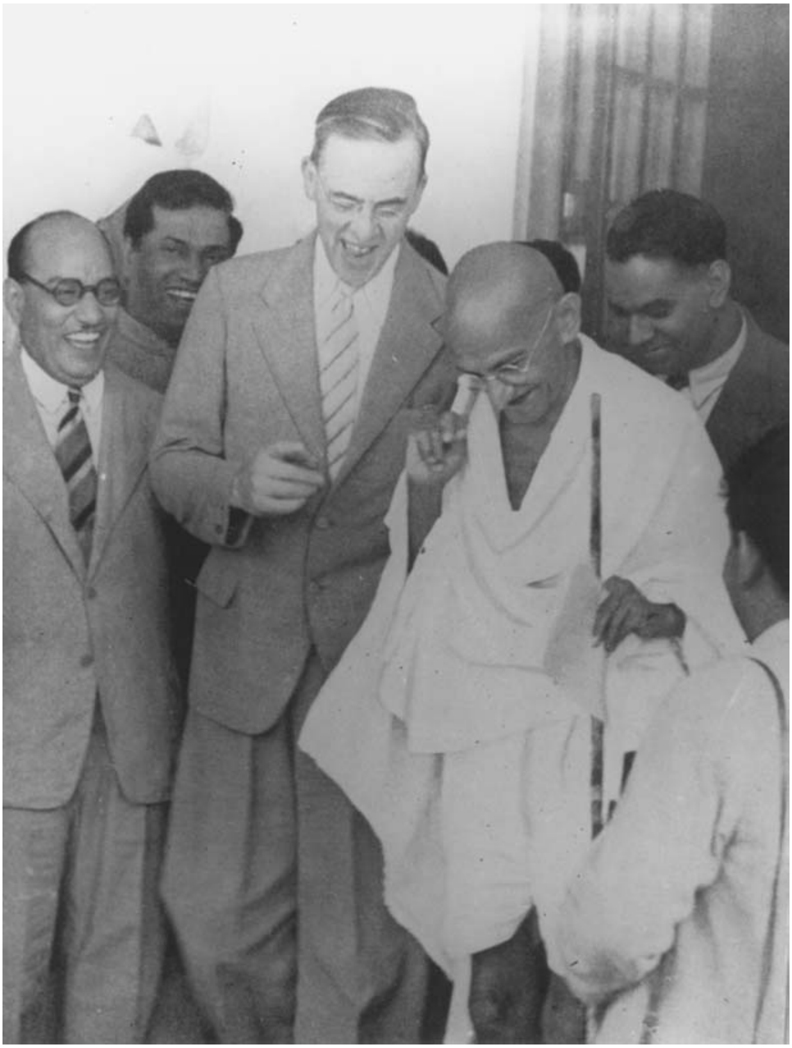

Illustration 10 Gandhi with Stafford Cripps, 1942 (No. 80834).

Illustration 11 Sir Stafford Cripps, 1942 (No. 24941).

5

THE CRIPPS OFFER, 1942

Harold Macmillan, in his autobiography *Winds of Change*, noted that the imagination of an average Briton was stirred by the vision and glory of 'the zenith of imperial fabric... the hymn of ever-widening empire on whose bounds the sun never set'. A villager from UP, when asked by the *lat sahib* (a political and administrative dignitary) why the sun never set in the British empire, thought for a while and replied: 'Perhaps the British could not be trusted in the dark.' Winston Churchill, Harold Macmillan, H.V. Hodson and Lord Linlithgow did not wish to disturb the fabric of the empire. But the winds of change were blowing over Great Britain itself, setting in motion forces which transformed social relations beyond recognition during the war years and thereafter. No longer did British children remember the song 'the rich man in his castle, the poor man at his gate', and even the archbishop was inclined to observe that communism was after all 'a Christian heresy'.[1] Despite such changes, the duty of every Briton who came to India to rule, from the Viceroy down to the young district officer, a member of the steel-frame, was expected to keep the colonial system going unimpaired. But the tensions generated by the observance of the colonial virtues were there for everyone to see. Stanley Baldwin, the Conservative leader, was able to recognize the newly emerging world. In December 1934, he observed: 'There is a wind of nationalism and freedom blowing round the world and blowing as strongly in Asia as anywhere in the world'. He went on to question Churchill and other party members who were opposed to the policy of reforms in India: 'What have we taught India for a century? We have preached English institutions and democracy and all the rest of it.'[2] Nevertheless, Linlithgow was unmoved in 1940–42 as Churchill had been in the 1930s by the niceties of such arguments. H.V. Hodson, however, did not fail to notice the inherent contradictions of British rule. 'The flower of Imperialist bureaucracy which blossomed in the central government of Indian Empire, was not an abstract organization nor a concourse of officials, but a veritable system of life', he wrote. 'The Viceroy was an integral part of the bureaucratic system. He was therefore

dangerously handicapped in performing his Viceregal functions properly but also his functions as the political head of the Government.'[3]

One of the colonial virtues was to maintain the image of invincibility and prestige of the ruling classes in India. The authority and power of the bureaucracy must remain unquestioned and unassailed. The Viceroy's supreme position had to be accepted as sacrosanct and beyond criticism. Not even the Secretary of State for India should do anything to impair his authority. The Viceroy was the man on the spot and his decision in all day-to-day affairs must be respected and regarded as final. Leopold Amery, the Secretary of State of India during the prime ministership of Winston Churchill 1940–45, was in trouble on several occasions and once he thought of submitting his resignation, since the Prime Minister accused him of pushing through some of his own ideas without authority from the Cabinet, for the guidance of the Viceroy who had complained to the Prime Minister directly. It was the wise counsel and mild intervention of Lord Halifax that saved the situation from worsening. Both Churchill and Linlithgow seemed pacified. Thereafter, Amery remained quite distant from the Viceroy; he detested his 'frowns' and the position of the Secretary of State for India under Amery became somewhat insignificant as long as Linlithgow held the viceroyalty. In spite of fervent appeals and suggestions from Amery, the Viceroy held his ground, saying that the best policy was to 'lie back' and wait.[4] In Britain, Linlithgow's reputation as the 'do nothing' Viceroy had spread far and wide. In India, however, he had shown the door to the Congress by adopting the attitude of 'nothing doing', as recorded by Linlithgow himself.[5] After the passing of the Pakistan resolution by the Muslim League the Viceroy felt relaxed; he was in no hurry to resume a dialogue with the Congress. The war effort in India was forging ahead undisturbed. The government was sitting pretty; the best policy therefore was 'to lie back'.

This state of complacency was disturbed with the launching of the individual civil disobedience by the Congress. Vinoba Bhave offered *satyagraha* after making a speech. He was promptly arrested and sentenced to three months' imprisonment on 17 October 1940. Jawaharlal Nehru also offered civil disobedience after delivering a speech, for which he was awarded four years' imprisonment. Sentences could vary for similar offences depending on the danger posed to the state by individual offenders. That is how the British concept of the rule of law operated and was enforced. It was a period of war and the judiciary did not want to take chances, lest the pillars of the empire start crumbling by 'violent' speeches and hence they upheld the system of punishment under the law rigorously! During 1940–41 more than 20,000 Congress men and women, including members of the working committee, erstwhile Congress ministers, speakers, provincial heads of the Congress and several thousand members from the rank and file, were sent to jail.[6] In addition to the operation of Defence of India Act,

under which these men and women were sentenced, the government of India wanted to promulgate the Revolutionary Movements Ordinance. Lord Linlithgow, in his telegram of September 1940, asked the Secretary of State for India to consider its passage: 'I and my advisers are now clear that we are moving towards the moment when we shall have to proclaim [the declaration of an organization as an unlawful association under the Criminal Amendment Act] Congress, arrest the Working Committee including Gandhi and leaders of the Congress in all provinces. I trust that we shall take no action stronger than the situation requires, and that we must be free to take decisions and to act from day to day without reference home.'[7] Lord Linlithgow had hoped that Prime Minister Churchill would support the move.

One of the principal advisers to the Viceroy was Reginald Maxwell who had drafted the ordinance and had stated that the government aim was 'to crush the Congress finally as a political organization', and that he wished to strike at the Congress 'before the public have too far forgotten' the grievances against the Congress government. Maxwell said in the Central Assembly in 1941 that the government considered the Congress as 'public enemy number one' and that Congressmen were 'far worse than the Germans and Italians' since they were at any rate fighting for their countries, but these others [Congressmen, socialists and communists who were detained without trial in prison and were subjected to inhuman treatment] were enemies of society, who wanted to subvert the existing order'.[8] Thus it was clear what Linlithgow and his advisers were after. They wanted the 'extinction' of the Congress and the promulgation of the Revolutionary Movements Ordinance, reminiscent of the Rowlatt Act 1918, which had finally resulted in the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of April 1919. Amery was surprised at Linlithgow's request for such a stringent law. Linlithgow had refused to take heed of Amery's appeals for opening a dialogue with the Congress in June–July 1940. After the offer of 8 August 1940, the political situation had not deteriorated to the extent that such an ordinance was called for. The individual civil disobedience was going on peacefully. Under the Defence of India rules more than 20,000 persons had been thrown into prison without any difficulty. Why then the ordinance?

The War Cabinet rightly asked why the government of India was asking for a *carte blanche* for action. The legal question of defining the revolutionary movement was involved. The ordinance had defined it as 'any movement declared to be revolutionary by the Viceroy legally to be considered such'.[9] Was it not a demand for absolutism to be enforced in India, which despite Congress opposition to the war effort, was still helping the British government with men, money and material? The Cabinet was not sure how membership of a political body like the Congress could be regarded as 'a criminal offence'. The Cabinet further pointed out that, they 'were prepared to support him [the Viceroy] in whatever steps were necessary to

maintain peace in India and India's effective part in the war. Before, however, we could agree to Congress being proclaimed we must know exactly what his programme involved.'[10] The Cabinet desired of the government of India to report 'any new facts explaining how the situation was developing and which had bearing on the need for taking action'. At another point Linlithgow was obliquely told that his proposed actions gave the impression of 'a political quarrel unrelated to the War'.[11] That was the crux of the problem. It was a political vendetta designed by Linlithgow against a dissident political party. Gowher Rizvi tells us that on the day Linlithgow signed the decree of 'extinction' of the Congress he announced the August 1940 offer seeking the cooperation of the Congress for the war effort. Was it diplomacy or duplicity on the part of Linlithgow?

The 8 August 1940 offer was bound to be rejected by the Congress. The Viceroy's offer emphasized continuity with past policy. It did mention, however, that dominion status was the future object of the British policy in relation to India. When the offer was being discussed, it was thought that the government should announce a time-table for the achievement of dominion status, say within a year of conclusion of the war. But Churchill in the Cabinet had the time-limit clause removed. So the instrument of agreement to be signed with India in the event of acceptance of dominion status was shelved. This was important because, if a treaty had been signed between Great Britain and India, it would have implied equality of status to India. Thus, in terms of a time-frame and grant of the symbolic equality of status, the declaration said nothing. The hesitancy and reluctance continued to bog down relations. Besides, the Congress had reaffirmed at the Ramgarh Congress session held in March 1940 that India's destiny lay in complete independence and freedom from British rule.

The viceregal declaration of 8 August that the government would not be a party 'to the coercion of large and powerful elements in India's national life into submission to a system of government whose authority was directly denied by them' was regarded by the Congress as a grant of communal veto to the Muslim League. Jinnah, on his part, considered the declaration a step forward in the right direction and thanked the government for the recognition of the special status and importance of the Muslim League in the constitution-making process.

On the same day, 8 August 1940, Linlithgow wrote to the provincial governors about his intention to promulgate the Revolutionary Movements Ordinance if the government at home approved it. Maxwell's terms 'to crush the Congress as a whole' and 'declaration of war' against the Congress were freely used by Lord Linlithgow in his letters to them. Fortunately, however, the Cabinet did not approve of Linlithgow's proposal, observing that 'if comprehensive action against Congress should become inevitable it would be desirable if possible for public confidence both here and abroad to represent reason for our action against Congress

movement as their programme of obstruction of war effort and not their political aspirations'.[12]

Linlithgow felt somewhat unhappy and depressed at the lack of support for his moves and complained of tiredness. A rumour of his resignation was afloat but few took note of it. On the Indian political scene, the 8 August 1940 declaration was considered a landmark, suggesting Linlithgow's sterling achievement. It was in the theatre of war, however, that disquieting news came. In September 1940 Japan finalized a tripartite pact with Germany and Italy. Japan was already at war with China following the 'China incident' of 1937 wherein exchange of fire had taken place between them at the Marco Polo Bridge. The Japanese attack on the mainland of China eventually led to the USA–Japan confrontation. A power vacuum had been created in the Far East with the retreat of European colonialism since the 1920s. Resurgent Japan, whose GNP had risen to great heights ever since the First World War, attempted to fill the vacuum. Japan's thirst for power and markets led it to a war with the Soviet Union which ended in August 1939, before the outbreak of the Second World War in Europe.

Background of the Cripps mission

The Japanese thrust in the Pacific made swift gains. On 7 December 1941 Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in Hawaii destroying much of the US fleet. Germany also declared war against the USA on 11 December 1941, embroiling the entire world. Crippling the US bases in the Philippines, the Japanese occupied the Philippines and Indonesia. Within a few months Malaya and Singapore also fell. By mid-1942, all of south-east Asia and the Far East had been overrun by the Japanese, ending European rule. The Japanese also advanced into Burma and threatened India's eastern and north-eastern coasts.

These startling developments brought about a change in the thinking of the British government at home. Unless total support for the war effort came from India, the Japanese might repeat their victory in India. Indian public opinion must be reconciliated, despite the studied hostility of the Viceroy against the Congress and his policy of masterly inactivity. But the Viceroy would not budge from the position he had taken. It was for the Indians themselves to work out a solution, he argued. They are 'hopelessly and I suspect irremediably split by racial and religious divisions, which we cannot bridge, and which [would] become more acute as any real transfer of power by us draws nearer'. Hence, the Viceroy went on to advocate, 'we should stand firm and make no further move'. Clement Attlee found such an attitude 'distinctly disturbing'. To declare that 'there was nothing to be done but to sit tight on the declaration of August 1940' to say the least was defeatism and suggested definitive constructive action by the home

government to initiate dialogue with the political leaders of India for a constitutional advance. 'It is worth considering', Attlee wrote, 'whether someone should not be charged with a mission to try to bring the political leaders together'.[13] That formed the basis of the Cripps mission to India.

Meanwhile, it seems necessary to take a close look at what was going on in the mind of the Viceroy around this point of time, to situate the history of negotiations in a proper perspective. Lord Linlithgow's Reforms Commissioner, H.V. Hodson, had submitted a valuable report of his tour, undertaken between 8 November and 7 December 1941, of Madras, Orissa, Bengal, Bihar and Assam. The report was a competent document which provided useful insights into political developments in India. Linlithgow, however, seemed unimpressed by it and dubbed it of academic interest. To Amery he confided: 'I have no doubt whatever as to the educative value of his point of view of contacts of this nature, there is always the risk of one who without previous experience of the country, merely sits in the central government forming views which may be off the mark.'[14] To a great extent this might have been true of Linlithgow himself. Hodson had been Reforms Commissioner since 1939 and had visited India on several occasions while editing the prestigious journal *Round Table* in 1934–39. He was regarded as one of the most knowledgeable political analysts of the time.

Another familiar figure in the corridors of power hailed as an eminent constitutional expert was Reginald Coupland, who had also submitted a memorandum to the Viceroy delineating salient features of his 'solution' of the constitutional problem in India. The memorandum, raised by Coupland during the course of his dinner engagement with the Viceroy, greatly upset the latter. Coupland seems to have mentioned dominion status with full self-government for Indians as the ultimate goal, with an Indian executive responsible to the Indian legislature in the immediate future. Linlithgow asked how the Governor-General could remain 'beholden to the Indian Ministry with no safeguards and no limitations as to the field in which ministerial advice would have to prevail with the Governor-General' and 'the Governor-General would therefore be quite disabled for acting as Crown Representative'. Linlithgow further pointed out: 'I also tried to put to Coupland the very real difficulties which must arise in the field of defence if in that field the Governor-General was to be in the point of having to take the advice of his Ministers, and the impossibility of maintaining British troops in India if these were to be at the disposal of Indian Ministers responsible only to an Indian Legislature.'[15] The arguments and counter-arguments continued for sometime, which must have tired out the Viceroy if the following is any indication: 'But I find Coupland has got his "solution" in his mind, his ticket for home in his pocket, and his subjects I suspect neatly arranged in his twelve chapters, and that he was not disposed to welcome criticism which was in any degree destructive of those

plans.'[16] Coupland stayed on in India until the end of the Cripps mission, assisting Cripps in his negotiations with Indian leaders.

In a similar vein Linlithgow took to task even the Conservative mouthpiece *The Times* for 'the rather stupid leading article', and Linlithgow proceeded: 'I am afraid my rather rude comment to Inglis, their principal correspondent in India, was that weakness of the sort displayed in the leader would very soon correct itself, for no one would for long be found willing to pay three pence for what quite obviously was not worth half a penny.'[17] (The rude comment was omitted by the editors of the volume.)

On 2 January 1942 Amery recorded in his diaries that Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and 12 other moderates appealed to Prime Minister Churchill for a 'bold stroke', asking him to elevate India to dominion status at once and expand the Viceroy's Executive Council as an all India national government responsible directly to the crown and restore popular governments in the provinces.[18] The Sapru scheme was thrown into the waste-paper basket since Linlithgow called it 'Home Rule for the Viceroy'.[19]

The Viceroy told the Secretary of State for India that General Chiang Kai Shek's 'desire to talk to Gandhi and Nehru raises certain difficulties, given the fact that these two gentlemen are at the moment not on speaking terms with me'. At the same time he did not fail to put forward a plea to bring Jinnah into the picture as well. The general had not expressed any desire to meet Jinnah but Linlithgow wrote, 'I shall have to coax him to receive the head of the Muslim League (Jinnah), whether he feels inclined to or not.'[20] It is interesting to note that Winston Churchill had instructed Linlithgow not to allow a meeting between Nehru and the general.[21] It would, however, have been a diplomatic affront to General Chiang Kai Shek, when he had expressly requested such a meeting. It was also widely known that Nehru was quite friendly with Madame Chiang.

While Linlithgow was not 'on speaking terms' with Congress leaders of the stature of Gandhi and Nehru he did not fail to impress upon Roger Lumly, the Governor of Bombay, that he 'might find a suitable opportunity to ask Jinnah to a meal'.[22] Lumly promptly informed Linlithgow: 'Coupland arrived here on the day I received your telegram [15 January 1942]. I asked Jinnah to lunch and he came today. Clow was also there. Jinnah was most friendly throughout and if there is any effect from the social contact with him, I think it would be favourable. After lunch I had a talk with him which I intended would be a short one, so that he could tackle Coupland; but at the first opening, [Jinnah] gave an exposition of the Muslim point of view in 45 minutes. He appears quite satisfied with our attitude, although as will be seen, he expressed some fears that the British press and public opinion would be taken in by Congress and other Hindu propaganda.' Finally, Lumly informed Linlithgow: 'I repeat Jinnah was most friendly. He abused no one, not even Fazlul Haq . . .'[23] Linlithgow on his part wished to remove any 'apprehension' of Jinnah 'that His Majesty's

Government will allow themselves to be stampeded by Hindus and the Congress'. He told Amery that he wanted the home government to know that 'Jinnah stands firm on Pakistan and thinks that Hindus are out to get us to make a declaration which would prejudice and rule out Pakistan and having obtained that, use it as a weapon with which to intimidate Muslims'.[24] This was an oft-repeated fear, whether real or imaginary, which he wished to stress if only to press his demand for Pakistan. The Viceroy never contradicted Jinnah's stand, nor did he argue about the rationality behind such a demand. Obviously it suited the purpose of the Linlithgow government. His stress on Congress antipathy to the British government was another weapon he used to keep the home government averse to any possibility of making overtures to the Congress. He referred to the Bardoli resolution of the Congress held in December 1941 which, according to Linlithgow, implied 'Congress demand for surrender by His Majesty's Government to Congress claims, ignoring other parties and interests and their own obligations in the hope that they would get Congress support in fighting the war'. Congress stood for 'full freedom'. The Viceroy further stated that the British system according to the Congress leaders symbolized 'arrogant imperialism which is indistinguishable from Fascist authoritarianism'. Hence, it was obvious that no further move was called for to placate the support of a party like the Indian National Congress.[25]

In his comprehensive telegram of 21 January 1942, Linlithgow laid bare his heart to Amery by declaring 'my own considered view' of the political situation in India.[26] In the process, unwittingly, he provided a lucid exposition of his philosophy of imperialism in a naked form, delineating, in no uncertain terms, the main features of his policy of holding on to India by force. He wrote:

> I know that we are frequently urged to do everything to touch the heart of India and our sympathies naturally lean in that direction. But Cabinet will I think agree with me that India and Burma have no natural association with the Empire from which they are alien by race, history and religion, and for which as such neither of them have any natural affection and both are in the Empire, because they are conquered countries which had been brought there by force, kept there by our controls, and which hitherto it has suited to remain under protection. I suspect that the moment they think that we may lose the war or take a bad knock, their leaders will be much more concerned to make terms with the victor at our expense than to fight for the ideals to which so much lip-service is given . . .[27]

In the next paragraph he enunciated his policy towards India:

> What we have to decide however is whether in such circumstances, whatever the feeling of India, we intend to stay in this country for our own reasons, whether India's place in imperial communication is not so important, at any rate in war-time, that we must hold on and must not relinquish power beyond a certain point. If we accept that India is too important at this stage for us to take any chances, then we would rather face such trouble as we may have to face here as a result of making no concessions now in the political field than make concessions which are ill-advised and dangerous and on which we might have to go back for reasons for imperial security at a later stage in the war.

He was opposed to 'a policy of nibbling, and of endeavouring to buy off opposition by concessions of greater or lesser importance'. He described the Congress leaders as 'entirely ruthless politicians', who 'short of acceptance of their full demand no sacrifices however great can be relied on to keep them quiet'.[28] At the same time he informed Amery: 'I need not develop the unfortunate effect on those who genuinely sympathize with us in this country, or on those to whom we have given undertakings such as the Muslim League, or on the Princes, of allowing ourselves to be stampeded into negotiations with Congress or acceptance of Congress demand.'[29] 'My general conclusions viewing this difficult matter with greatest detachment that I can, and with full sense of its importance, is in these circumstances that we should stand firm and make no further move.'[30]

It was Clement Attlee who took a stand against the Viceroy's 'considered view' and his 'general conclusions'. To begin with Attlee wrote to Amery on 24 January 1942, without losing time, saying, 'I find the Viceroy's dispatch distinctly disturbing . . . I must confess that the general effect of his dispatch does not increase my confidence in the Viceroy's judgement. I should like to know what other man as the Chief Justice think of the position. Linlithgow seems to me to be a defeatist . . . It is worth considering whether someone should not be charged with a mission to try to bring the political leaders together.'[31] Amery in reply to Attlee tried to soften the impact of the Viceroy's ill-advised discourse. He wrote on 26 January 1942 to Attlee: 'Like you, I find one or two things in the tone of Linlithgow telegram not altogether to my liking. But I confess that I do not see how we can differ at this moment from his general conclusion, or that there is the slightest prospect of any constitutional step at this moment which would improve the war effort or bring the parties together.'[32]

Attlee was not satisfied with Amery's amplification and followed it by submitting a 'Memorandum on the Indian Political Situation' on 2 February 1942 for the consideration of the War Cabinet. It was a severe indictment of the Viceroy's attitude. Quoting from the Viceroy's telegram, paragraph 14,

Attlee declared: 'This is an astonishing statement to be made by a Viceroy... If it were true it would form the greatest possible condemnation of our rule in India and would amply justify the action of every extremist in India... It is one of the great achievements of our rule in India that, even if they do not entirely carry them out, educated Indians do accept British principles of justice and liberty. We are condemned by Indians not by the means of Indian ethical conceptions but by our own which we have taught them to accept.'[33] He went on to argue against the Viceroy's ideas and irrationality of his mind, saying: 'I find it quite impossible to accept and act on the crude imperialism of the Viceroy, not only because I think it is wrong, but because I think it is fatally short-sighted and suicidal. I should certainly not be prepared to cover up the ugliness with the cloak of pious sentiment about liberty and democracy.'[34] Not since the impeachment of Warren Hastings had such a denunciation of the crown-representative in India been made by one 'patriotic Briton' of another.

Attlee did not stop with that. He took the Secretary of State for India to task: 'The Secretary of State thinks that we may weather the immediate storm by doing nothing; but what of subsequent storms? Such a hand-to-mouth policy is no statesmanship.'[35] Then he provided a positive direction for the future course of action to be taken by the War Cabinet of the government of Great Britain: 'I do consider that now is the time for an act of statesmanship. To mark time is to lose India... A renewed effort must be made to get the leaders of the Indian political parties to unite. It is quite obvious from his telegram that the Viceroy is not the man to do this. Indeed his telegram goes far to explain his past failures. His mental attitude is expressed in paragraph 8 when he talks of regaining lost ground after the war.'[36] He suggested a practical alternative to the problem: 'To entrust some person of high standing either already in India or sent out from here with wide powers to negotiate a settlement in India... There is a precedent for such action. Lord Durham saved Canada to the British Empire. We need a man to do in India what Durham did in Canada.'[37] Finally, Attlee observed: 'My conclusion therefore is that a representative with powers to negotiate within wide limits should be sent to India now, either as a special envoy or a replacement of the present Viceroy, and that a Cabinet Committee should be appointed to draw up terms of reference and powers.'[38]

Clement Attlee's memorandum could not be ignored. Not only had he delivered a stunning blow to Linlithgow, he had exposed the absurdity of the tory position in India. Sir David Monteath, permanent under-secretary, who was the mainstay of political conservatism in the India Office, did not fail to recognize the serious import of Attlee's well-considered point of view. In his minute Monteath recorded: 'The last para[graph] of the memo [randum] is v [very] near a motion of Censure on the present Viceroy.'[39]

At the same time he pointed out a flaw in the proposal of Attlee: 'Mr Attlee seems to want a plenipotentiary who would sign, seal and deliver a bargain which Parliament would be required to honour.'[40] In spite of Monteath's views, the impact of Attlee's memorandum was instantaneous. Prime Minister Winston Churchill announced on 5 February 1942 in the Cabinet that he would be prepared to convert the National Defence Council, then functioning in India, into an elective body of about 100 persons representing the provincial assemblies, the princes and others, expanding its functions to frame a new constitution after the war. In a rare gesture, Churchill declared he would take upon himself the task of announcing the proposals in person, flying to India for this purpose. He created a stir around by such an announcement. He did not take anyone into confidence before he did so. Despite Attlee's memorandum, it appears he wished to keep the initiative in his own hands. Amery informed Linlithgow: 'Winston suddenly pronounced the great scheme . . . All I would say is that it has in it some characteristic strokes of Winston's genius.'[41] On 6 February, in a most secret personal minute, the Prime Minster asked the Secretary of State for India to convene a meeting consisting of 'Lord President [Sir John Anderson], the Lord Privy Seal [Mr Clement Attlee], and no others, and let me have a note implementing the project we discussed in the Cabinet [on 5 February] . . . It is understood that they would have at least a week to think it over in Delhi before any final decision was taken. The object is to discuss war matters with Wavell.'[42]

While the Prime Minister's personal initiative to resolve the political impasse in India continued, creating a flurry of activity both at home and in India, the War Cabinet took three decisions on 5 February 1942 with the Prime Minster in the chair. First, it was decided that a representative of the government of India should attend the meeting of the War Cabinet in London when the Indian war effort came up for discussion. Incidentally, way back in 1917 when the War Cabinet was formed during the First World War, an Indian representative did attend the meetings of War Cabinet for such proposes. A representative from India had attended the Versailles peace conference as well. The practice seems to have lapsed. Second, the Indian component of the Viceroy's Executive Council was increased from seven to nine members, one representing the Depressed Classes and the other the Sikh community. Third, the War Cabinet agreed to follow Attlee's memorandum with regard to making 'a renewed effort to get the leaders of the political parties to unite' and 'that a representative, with power to negotiate with the Indian leaders should be sent to India now', and 'a cabinet committee appointed to draw up terms of reference and power'.[43]

The issue of the formation of the new National Defence Council, its powers and functions engaged the attention of the members of the War Cabinet for about a week. All aspects of the problem, its pros and cons,

how the Prime Minister's declaration would be received by Indians, especially the Congress and the Muslim League, were raised and examined. The Viceroy's views were awaited in the meantime. The Secretary of State for India prepared a preliminary note on 'proposed expansion of Defence Council' on 7 February as desired by the Prime Minster. On the same day another note was produced by the Secretary of State on the subject. The notes aimed at complementing each other but were somewhat conflicting on some basic issues. On 9 February, 'Further notes after discussion with Lord Chancellor Sir John Simon and Sir D. Monteath'[44] were put up by Amery, which further complicated the issue, inviting Attlee's intervention.

The first note suggested a composition of about 100 members for the council, of whom 25 should be from the princes, 'that is about the same proportion as the present National Defence Council'. The second note suggested 60–70 persons, half of whom should represent provincial governments and half communities through their organizations; the number of princes suggested was 20. The first note stipulated that British Indian members should be elected from among the existing members of the lower houses of provincial legislative assemblies, through proportional representation at one election. A note stated: 'If this is considered too favourable to the Congress, the members of each community to be elected might be fixed in proportion to the last census, or by the proportion fixed by the India Act for the elected members of the Central Assembly. (This last basis would be more favourable to the Muslims.)' Amery's anxiety was to see that the Congress did not have an upper hand and to help Muslims obtain a better percentage of seats. A second note stated: 'Jinnah may be at liberty to state the case for Pakistan otherwise he will veto the scheme from the outset.'[45] In addition to Jinnah the names of Sikander Hyat Khan and Zafrullah Khan were mentioned. Why? It was not clear. Both the notes provided for the adherence to the principle of the 8 August 1940 declaration which implied that the 'pledges' given by the British to the Muslims would not be disturbed.

The functions of the council should be 'full discussion, in private and public on the conduct of war and liaison between the war effort at the centre and effort throughout India'. The council might meet more frequently to enable it to be more effective. This council 'shall be . . . the representative body to frame the constitution after the war'. On 9 February, after discussion with Lord Chancellor Sir John Simon and Sir David Monteath, Amery put up 'further notes' with the following suggestions: a council consisting of 140 to 150 members, elected mainly by the lower houses of the provincial legislatures and the existing Central Legislature in the case of British India, with a small additional list of about 12 members nominated by the Viceroy; the provincial members should be chosen by each province separately; the method of election remained as provided for the Central Legislative Assembly under the Government of India Act 1935, first

schedule; the number of princely elements to be 30; the Central Legislative Assembly elected members were to elect by proportional representation some 16–20 members; and the pledges of the August 1940 declaration for Muslims and princes to be respected.

The whole matter was made as complicated as possible by the committee of Amery, Simon and Monteath. Without going into the strength and weaknesses of the above proposal, it may be illuminating to look at the criticism of the Lord Privy Seal, Clement Attlee. On 10 February, Attlee wrote to Amery: 'The further notes . . . return to all the features to which I took objection on the first paper while adding some others.' He listed his objections in brief and precisely, which he alone could do:[46]

1. 'It was agreed that Central Legislature having been elected a very long time ago [1934] were out of date and should not form part of the electoral panel.'
2. 'They give additional weightage to the Muslims although this is amply provided for already in the provinces. Hindus already have a legitimate grievance.'
3. 'The inclusion of individuals selected by the Viceroy entirely defeats the whole conception of a body representing the elected representatives of the Indian peoples.'
4. 'Smaller minorities are sufficiently provided for in the provincial assemblies. This suggestion will be taken as an attempt to pack the new body.'
5. Unless the council is to be unwieldy in size . . . provincial government representatives must be avoided: 'we want a body representing the peoples of India not a number of separate provinces'.
6. 'Thirty is an excessive representation of the Princes and will certainly be resented.'
7. '140 to 150 is too large to be made an effective body.'
8. And last but not the least important: 'Insistence on the 1940 pledge at this stage will kill the scheme dead. Far better say nothing at this stage but allow the new body to work as a National Council. There is no need to bid the devil good morning.'

Amery was stung by the last of Attlee's remarks. He replied the same day:

> As regards the Moslems, the main danger of what now looks on the face of it is a highly unitary scheme for India will be Moslem opposition and the kind of representation provided for the Moslems by the Act seems to me the last they are likely to look at. As you know Jinnah throughout demands 50:50 on the footing that he speaks for a people of equal status with the Hindus . . . As for

> bidding the devil good morning, I know my devil sufficiently to be certain that he will want to have an answer to his questions at once and will refuse to play unless he gets it. There can be no question of our going back on 1940 pledge and that being so nothing but mischief could be caused by anything that looks like evading the issue.'[47]

Attlee, without any partisanship, had attempted to get the best bargain for India while making desperate effort to convince the tory leadership in the War Cabinet of a more enlightened and just policy. He did not fail to detect the all-consuming passion among the tories to protect Muslims from what they called Hindu domination. Why such a powerful urge to remain partisan in favour of Muslims alone? Was not Jinnah's demand for equality of status on the 50:50 basis a creation of the British themselves? If a democratic system was not suitable to Indian conditions, why did they not try out another system which would keep all communities in India properly represented in the policy-making and decision-making process? The answers to such questions were obvious enough. Linlithgow wrote on 13 February to Amery even as the Prime Minister's scheme on the National Defence Council was being discussed: 'To sum up it is to my mind a fatal defect in the Prime Minister's proposal that it precipitates the whole constitutional controversy, which is so largely communal and on a present view irreconcilable, into the conduct of the war and the day to day government of the country. *The marriage of two elements which both our pledges and the interest of India command us to keep apart renders the proposal not more but less likely to obtain the cooperation of the political parties, especially those of the minorities*.' Linlithgow was candid enough to state in good faith that the British pledges to the minorities were designed 'to keep apart' the political parties, the 'two elements', the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League.[48] 'The marriage of the two elements' were not in the interest of British as stated by him.

The Prime Minister's proposal was not by any means well thought out. It was not designed to please anyone. Amery and Monteath pointed out, while supporting Linlithgow's telegram of 13 February, 'It will not take Congress long to detect the feature of the plan (the executive authority of British India will remain with the Governor-General-in-Council subject as of now to the control of Secretary of State and the Crown in Parliament), which they will denounce as a sham, while the Moslems and other minorities will denounce it as "one more surrender of our friends to placate our enemies".'[49] In spite of the position of the Governor-General having been kept undisturbed by these proposals, Linlithgow did not fail to recognize the future shape of things to come: 'My own expectation would be that the new Council would soon acquire real power which would prove more than embarrassing to Government. This indeed is implicit in the proposal to

entrust it with selection of representatives at War Cabinet and Peace Conference. Whoever nominally appoints and instructs them, such representatives must in practice be answerable to the body that selects them, gives them its confidence and can if it wishes them, insist on their recall. The breakdown of my Council's responsibility would spell weakness just where strength is most needed. As a further example, I shudder at the prospect of allowing such a body to take on, as you propose, the organizing of air-raid precautions since the efforts of political bodies to do so are already a potential source of grave difficulty to provincial authorities. I set my face firmly against anything smacking of parallel government.'[50] It was exactly such an attitude of Linlithgow, who refused to accept any dilution of his authority or diminution of his power, which destroyed the possibility of success of the Cripps mission, as would be seen from the vituperative dialogue between Linlithgow and Cripps in March–April 1942.

The idea of the Prime Minister visiting India was given up. Instead, the Prime Minister proposed to broadcast to India on Sunday 15 February, 'appealing to Indians to come together to save India and, leaving past and present constitutional controversies on one side, join in an enlarged Defence of Indian Council of all the best men from every community and province', as Amery put it to Linlithgow in his telegram of 11 February 1942. Linlithgow objected to the proposal 'that Prime Minister should contemplate announcing a scheme of such profound constitutional significance without fullest consultation with me and my advisers'. He suggested postponement of the broadcast by a few days: the Prime Minister agreed, informing the Viceroy on 13 February that 'no broadcast will take place for ten days. The possible fall of Singapore must be considered in timing.'[51] Next day Linlithgow sent in his 'comments on the merits of the scheme', and requesting more time 'for further consideration'. He cited a further problem:

> Congress was bound to be the largest element on the proposed Council, but it would not have a clear majority over all the others combined. Of 110 British India seats it would sweep the 44 caste Hindu seats and might get some support from the 10 depressed caste members, the 4 Commerce and Industry, and 2 Labour. I don't think it would be sure of getting 50 percent of the *British Indian* representatives to support it and the Princes would of course vote against it on most issues. But it might certainly get its nominee elected to the British India party representative here – though the influence of the other parties might lead to a compromise on moderate like Rajagopalachari rather than Nehru.
>
> That prospect doesn't alarm me as much as that of antagonising the Moslems who will be less ½ of the British Indian

> representatives and as the Princes are mainly Hindus – less than ¼ of the whole body.[52]

The quote is from the Secretary of State's minutes of 15 February marked 'most secret' for the Prime Minister.

On 15 February, Singapore fell to the Japanese. Amery's telegram of 17 February to Linlithgow pointed out that the Prime Minister and others were 'absorbed by critical situation and may not now secure discussion for a day or two. Meanwhile, my personal impression is that your very effective criticism will probably dispose of scheme in its original form.'[53] In fact the fear of Congress supremacy in the new council, the fear of antagonizing Muslims, and opposition of the Viceroy were likely to kill the Prime Minister's scheme. As far as the proposed broadcast of the Prime Minister was concerned, the Governors of Madras, Bengal and Bombay had several reservations. The Governor of Madras was categorical in his opposition and considered it a hindrance to the war effort. The Bengal Governor 'objected to linking of constitution framing body with war effort', whereas the Bombay Governor stressed 'the need to dispel doubts about our intentions'.[54]

On 19 February 1942 Clement Attlee took over as the Deputy Prime Minster and Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs. Stafford Cripps became a member of the War Cabinet and Leader of the House of Commons. Ernest Bevin, Minister of Labour and National Service, continued to be a member of the War Cabinet along with Attlee and Cripps thus adding strength to the Labour perspective in the policy-making during the war. On 26 February the War Cabinet committee on India met with the Prime Minister in the chair. Two issues were discussed made: first, 'the terms of any public announcement which should make clear beyond any doubt the nature of what was proposed to India'; second, whether any further constitutional advance should be made at the present time. Doubtless the deliberations on the issues had an important bearing on the next move suggested by the War Cabinet. The committee agreed to meet the next day at 5 pm. It was clear from the deliberations of the meeting of 27 February wherein a 'memorandum covering draft declaration was submitted by the Secretary of State for India' that the Labour initiative once again became preponderant. The War Cabinet committee on India of 27 February was chaired by Clement Attlee, the Deputy Prime Minister. The conclusions reached at this meeting formed the basis of future government of India and cleared the ground for sending a mission to India to negotiate a settlement with the Indian leaders.

Subsequent meetings of the War Cabinet committee on India were held on 28 February, 1 March (twice) and 2 March (twice), with Attlee in the chair. On 2 March 1942, the War Cabinet committee met to finalize the draft declaration submitted by Clement Attlee. In between, frantic discussions

on issues had taken place; minutes were written, considered and draft agreed upon. Amery confided to Linlithgow on 2 March how hectic it had been for him and the others: 'I expect your head is in a whirl, as is mine, over the development of the last few days. There is a sense of humour in that Winston, after making infinite difficulties for both of us in respect of whatever constructive suggestions we put forward, has now, as is his wont, seen the red light (especially the American red light) overnight. There is equal humour in the fact that Attlee and Co., from whom I had practically no support before, are now in full cry behind Cripps in clamouring for the maximum!!' He went on to warn: 'As a matter of fact it seems to me that the bark of the new declaration is in many ways more alarming than its bite.'[55]

The Cripps mission was the handiwork of Clement Attlee. On 8 March 1942, Rangoon was lost to the Japanese. Amery records: 'I suggested that there were some reasons why a Secretary of State was the proper person to go, apart from the fit that Cripps going would give both to the Moslems in India and the Tories here... Winston replied to the effect that first reason [*sic*] he was of the left, it would be much easier for him to carry through what is essentially pro-Moslem and reasonably, conservative policy...' Amery remained quiet but summed up the position in his diary: 'Left-wing Champion was being used for Tory purposes.'[56] These developments were bound to upset Linlithgow. He felt deeply disturbed and sent a telegram on 10 March 1942 suggesting his resignation. Amery remarked: 'Linlithgow had made what had always been a well-fortified office into one that was quite impregnable',[57] but no longer. Attlee had made a serious dent on Linlithgow's impregnable fortress. The resignation, however, was refused. Later Amery told Churchill that he was 'in a happier frame of mind'.[58] Linlithgow had the last laugh in the end. He sabotaged the Cripps mission, avenging the insult he had suffered from Labour. But for Linlithgow, the mission had a good chance of success. It is now time to have a close look at the Cripps mission.

Cripps: negotiating a settlement

Sir Stafford Cripps planned to arrive in Delhi on 22 March 1942, accompanied by Sir Frank Turnbull, private secretary of Leopold Amery, the Secretary of State for India, who was considered to be a knowledgeable person having been in the India Office a long time. Cripps had chosen, in addition, two secretaries of his own. One of them was A.D.K. Owen, a socialist, who had a very high opinion of Cripps's accomplishments as a politician and negotiator, and the other was Graham Spry. Cripps wanted to stay in Delhi to meet and negotiate with important political leaders of India for about two weeks. Among the Congress leaders he had in mind were Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (Congress President), Jawaharlal Nehru,

C. Rajagopalachari, Govind Ballabh Pant, B.G. Kher, Dr Khan Sahib and of course Gandhi. The Muslim League leaders whom he wished to interview were Jinnah, Sikander Hyat Khan, Khwaja Nazimuddin and Saadullah. Among non-Muslim League leaders he chose Fazlul Haq and Allah Baksh. On his list were also Liberal leaders like Sapru and Jayakar; Hindu Mahasabha leader Sawarkar; Depressed Classes leader Dr Ambedkar; and Labour leader N.M. Joshi. As far as the Sikhs, Europeans and princes were concerned he wanted to rely on the judgement of others. On behalf of the princes, however, he wanted to meet V.T. Krishnamachari, nawab of Chaltari, and representatives of Bhopal, Bikaner, Nawanagar etc. In fact, he met many more princely representatives as well as a number of leaders of various groups. To begin with he was to have stayed with the Viceroy for a couple of days, meeting him, the commander-in-chief, members of the Viceroy's Executive Council and his official advisers. Among the Governors of provinces he had thought of Hallett (UP), Glancy (the Punjab), Herbert (Bengal) and Roger Lumly (Bombay).

Long before Cripps arrived in India, Linlithgow had requested Amery to ensure that Cripps did not have commitments in advance. 'I would naturally not wish to tie Cripps's hands in any way in advance', said Linlithgow, 'but would suggest that he avoids commitments as to his programme until he arrives here. For example, it might be unfortunate if he were in active touch with the Congress leaders before being in touch with Sikander (who occupies a particular position in relation to war effort in the Punjab). There are many similar matters which he might consider on arrival, but as I say, I did not wish to tie his hands in advance.'[59] Cripps began his programme as he thought fit rather than wait for the suggestions of the Viceroy regarding whom to meet first and whom last. He had merely two or three weeks for his negotiations and he needed to move fast. He moved a bit too fast for the liking of Linlithgow, who was somewhat nervy about Cripps coming to India as the representative of the War Cabinet and His Majesty's Government. He told Amery: 'if in the ultimate event it is my fate to remain in India and attempt to work a scheme negotiated with political parties by Cripps, it is most essential, that my position in Indian eyes should be protected in all that the Prime Minister may say and in the general instructions under which Cripps may represent the Cabinet. I need not go into further details.'[60] Leopold Amery tried his best to remove Linlithgow's misgivings about the choice of Cripps to negotiate on behalf of the Cabinet; it was a correct decision besides being advantageous to the Tory government. 'A left winger and in close touch with Nehru and the Congress' was better suited, since it would either 'increase chances of success, slight as they are, and to mitigate any blame thrown upon the Government as a whole for failure', opined Amery.[61] Of course, the Secretary of State for India would have been 'the more obvious person, and you and I know each other's mind so well', yet 'my going would have been

greatly interpreted as committing the government to nothing more than a limited policy of talking about agreement'. In a bid to allay Linlithgow's fears as well as assuage his ruffled feelings, Amery argued:

> I think Cripps fully realizes the difficulties in front of him and the prospect of his being denounced by Congress in India and by the Left wing here for having lent himself to so reactionary and limited a policy. I have just been having a long intimate talk with him and I feel confident that he really means to play the game of the government policy and by you. In these Cabinet Committee meetings I have found him, though sometimes to be a bit abrupt and dogmatic in stating his views, always inclined to see the other point of view and anxious to come to an agreement. I am assured by all lawyer friends that he is first-rate and most moderate when it comes to settling a case out of court and that is probably what he is being told to do now.[62]

During the past few weeks Linlithgow had passed through rather rough times. He must have heard of Clement Attlee's denunciation of all that Linlithgow stood for in India. That had set in motion a chain of political activities beginning with the Prime Minister's announcement that he would personally visit India to address the Indian people to gain their support for war. Linlithgow had termed it as one of 'the explosions of the Prime Minister's mind', the brunt of which had to be borne by him. In the meantime, several moves were made towards constitutional advance, in vain. Then the proposal to send someone from the Cabinet to India came up for consideration and, throughout early March, the War Cabinet was engaged in considering the draft declaration and the statement to be made in the House of Commons by the Prime Minister. Linlithgow in his characteristic style, but in a worn-out tone, pointed out how difficult it had been for him to tackle 'the series of constitutional bombs which have been exploding under my tail at regular intervals throughout the week'.[63] He went on to explain: 'I need not elaborate to you the extreme difficulty of the situation in which I find myself, when I am asked to take, at the shortest notice, and with the minimum opportunities for consultation . . . decision of the gravest importance affecting every corner of an area as large as Europe, as diversely populated and quite as prolific of thorny political and racial problems; and all this at a time when the Japanese are walking up our front drive and I am changing my Commander-in-Chief for the fourth time.' About the draft declaration, he said that it 'would be a calamity' and argued against it: 'We are putting together a pronouncement which must affect deeply and permanently, the whole future of our relations with India, and the outcome of which must bear very directly upon the issue of victory or defeat for the Allies. Yet we work at breakneck speed

with little time for...'[64] Not that Linlithgow was incompetent to shoulder the responsibility but, as Nehru said, he was 'slow of mind', besides it was a habit with him to obstruct; he also seemed a misanthrope. Reginald Coupland observed that Linlithgow's 'sense of duty' and 'his honesty' of purpose did command respect 'but his instincts are conservative; he raises all possible objections to any course; he wants to go slowly and cautiously with as little risk as possible... and didn't like being jolted on... He seems to feel the whole burden rests on him *alone*.'[65] In spite of his self-proclaimed virtues, Linlithgow was criticized, unfairly according to him, and finally he tendered his resignation to Prime Minister Churchill on 10 March 1942. Of course this was not an appropriate moment to accept any resignation much less of the high-ranking Viceroy.

Linlithgow must have known that his resignation would not be accepted since it was not the moment to take such a drastic action, when the threat to Indian security was truly real. It is not clear why he sent it. No formal letter of resignation is available in the *Transfer of Power* proceedings. A lurking suspicion seems to be his antipathy to the appointment of Sir Stafford Cripps as the representative of the War Cabinet to visit India. It is of course an enlightened guess, a mere conjecture, but otherwise why would the Secretary of State for India Amery and Prime Minister Churchill emphasize the point that Cripps was on their side for the mission? Amery explained the reasons and validity of Cripps's appointment at length. Then it was the turn of Winston Churchill, in his private and secret telegram of 10 March, to attempt to pacify Linlithgow: 'My own point is that nothing matters except the successful and unflinching defence of India as a part of general victory, and this is also the conviction of Sir Stafford Cripps. Do not therefore think of quitting your post at this juncture, for this might be a signal for a general collapse in British Indian resistance with serious rupture of political unity here...'[66] Churchill complimented Cripps's 'great public spirit', who 'volunteered for this thankless and hazardous task... In spite of all the difference in our lines of approach, I have entire confidence in his overriding resolve to beat Hitler and Co. at all costs.' In his long telegram of 10 March 1942, Amery explained in-depth the rationale behind the appointment and he must have been reassuring. He maintained that 'his going at the moment would have precipitated the whole question of policy into acute party conflict and might well have broken up the Government here, so old friend, whatever else happens, you must see this thing through.'[67] Not that Linlithgow was keen to leave either. He enjoyed his viceregal pomp. Besides, his supreme belief was that he was doing his duty to his country as a patriotic Briton.

Throughout the last week of February and the first week of March 1942, pressure was building up on the British government to take remedial measures to get Indian support, by which it was meant Congress support, for the general war effort. The War Cabinet India committee met on

6 March to consider the memorandum prepared by the Secretary of State on Indian policy, and took note of the 'claim' of Nehru and Rajagopalachari 'that India cannot pull her full weight now unless Indians are given control of her present war effort but they too seem tacitly to recognize the constitution making should stand over'.[68] At the next day's meeting of the War Cabinet, attention was drawn to a report of Jawaharlal Nehru's speech to the effect that any promise of reforms at the end of the war was 'mere quibbling', and that in the immediate present 'a Provisional National Government should be formed, responsible to the Indian people and not to the Viceroy or to the British Government'.[69] Even the note by the advisers to the Secretary of State for India of 6 March 1942 stated: 'so far as the immediate present is concerned, they consider that there is advantage and little danger in taking a bold and dramatic action. They recommend that the Viceroy's Executive Council should be forthwith Indianized within the framework of the present constitution', and the governors should have 'non-official advisers'. According to them this would 'give clear proof of the determination to implement their promises'. Also the advisers were anxious to stress the point that the government 'should not at this juncture appear to associate themselves with any of the alternative proposals more especially with one which appears to open unnecessarily wide the door leading to the disintegration of India'.[70] The partition proposals were being considered behind the scene and the draft declaration had put forward its policy of creating not one 'partition' but several partitions of India thus starting the process of disintegration of the united fabric of India.

Apart from the pressures from India as well as the home front, the opinions of prominent world leaders on the Indian situation could not be totally ignored. The Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King wrote to Prime Minister Winston Churchill on 6 March 1942 thus: 'We believe that a fully self-governing India has a great part to play in free and equal association with the other troops of the British Commonwealth and that a free India fighting along side the other free peoples of the world will strengthen immediately the common cause.'[71] On the same day Mackenzie King sent another 'personal confidential secret' telegram informing Churchill of his talk with Dr T.V. Soong, Chinese Foreign Minister who visited Canada for a few days a week before: 'One of his sisters, as you doubtless know, is the wife of General Chiang Kai-Shek.' It seems Soong told Mackenzie that Chiang Kai-Shek felt that 'the alleged difficulties which might arise between Mohammedans and Hindus had been greatly exaggerated', that Chiang had impressed on Indian leaders that 'their interest like that of himself and the people of China lay in giving Britain all possible support but was convinced that unless the self-government problem could be met immediately this would not be forthcoming to the extent necessary to save existing situation which he regards as extremely precarious'. Mackenzie informed Churchill further that President Roosevelt

was apprised of the views of Chiang Kai-Shek and that 'all my colleagues in the government are very strongly of the view that no time should be lost in accepting and making known the proposals set forth in your telegram'.[72]

President Roosevelt's interest in Indian affairs was well known to the British. He seldom lost an opportunity to put forward his views for a true constitutional advance. Ever since the USA was drawn into the war in the Pacific, Roosevelt tried his best to impress upon Churchill the need for full self-government for India within the framework of the Balfour declaration of 1926. At that point, however, he was in favour of a more significant response to Indian aspirations. On 1 January 1942, Sir Teg Bahadur Sapru, supported by a few eminent moderate leaders, had appealed to Churchill to display 'far-sighted statesmanship' and agree to a formation of an Indian national government fully responsible to the crown. Churchill had brushed it aside by saying that the Indian Liberals 'were incapable of delivering the goods'. Roosevelt was not very happy with such an attitude. In March 1942, Sapru again raised his voice to the chagrin of the tories. Churchill, in a long telegram to Roosevelt, observed that the Liberal conference led by Sir Tej comprised essentially Hindu elements and that they were 'patrol agents of the Congress' and had put forward their, what Churchill termed, 'treacherous proposals' for an all India Hindu government, and that the British government had given a solemn pledge to 'Moslem India' that no constitutional changes, interim or final, could be introduced without 'Moslem consent', and the matter rested there.[73] When Girija Shankar Bajpai had his first meeting with President Roosevelt on 11 March 1942 as the Agent-General of the government of India in Washington, Bajpai reported to Linlithgow that the theme of the president's conversation with him was cooperation with India. The president pointed out that the 'British policy in relation to India for the last 20 or 30 years moved in one groove . . . Today India needs the inspiration of a new thought. "Dominion status" may be a right objective, but the type of government that would suit India must be evolved.' The president drew attention to the fact, although somewhat obliquely, that the grant of independence to Philippines had brought about 'Filipino solidarity' accelerating their resolve to fight the Japanese. Bajpai remarked that the president intended it to be understood that a similar devise 'may lead to comparable result in India'. The president of course observed that his views were 'purely personal' and 'disclaimed' any official concern in the Indian problem.[74] In spite of all disclaimers, the British government led by Winston Churchill felt the impact of such opinions from men of the stature of President Roosevelt and Prime Ministers of other dominions like Mackenzie King. Amery was candid enough to recognize that they had to give up the 'nothing to be done' policy and welcomed the changed environment created by 'the pressure outside upon Winston from Roosevelt, and upon Attlee & Co,

from their own party, plus the admission of Cripps to the War Cabinet suddenly opened the sluice gates, and the thing moved with a rush'.[75]

This was the background against which the Cripps mission was conceived, leading to the announcement by the Prime Minister on 11 March 1942 in the House of Commons of the government's resolve to offer important proposals to be carried by Sir Stafford Cripps to India for acceptance by Indian political parties. The draft declaration was essentially Clement Attlee's draft: 'On the 25 February the Prime Minister asked me to preside over a Cabinet Committee to consider the present position in India, and to make recommendations. I now submit, on behalf of the Committee for the consideration of the War Cabinet, the draft of a Declaration by His Majesty's Government regarding the future government of India.' The draft declaration, considered on 4 March 1942 by the War Cabinet, reads as follows:[76]

> His Majesty's Government, having considered the anxieties expressed in this country and in India as to the fulfilment of the promises made in regard to the future of India, have decided to lay down in precise and clear terms the steps which they propose shall be taken for the earliest possible realization of self-government in India. The object is the creation of a new Indian Union which shall constitute a Dominion, equal in every respect to the United Kingdom and the other Dominions of the Crown, and free to remain in or to separate itself from the equal partnership of the British Commonwealth of Nations.
>
> His Majesty's Government therefore make the following declaration:
>
> (a) Immediately upon the cessation of hostilities, steps shall be taken to set up in India, in the manner described hereafter, an elected body charged with the task of framing a new Constitution for India.
> (b) Provision shall be made, as set out below, for the participation of Indian States in the constitution-making body.
> (c) His Majesty's Government undertake to accept and implement forthwith the Constitution so framed subject only to:
>   (i) the right of any Province of British India that is not prepared to accept the new Constitution to retain for the time being its present constitutional position, provision being made for subsequent accession.
>   With such non-acceding Provinces, should they so desire, His Majesty's Government will be prepared to agree upon a new Constitution following the lines laid down above.
>   (ii) the signing of a treaty which shall be negotiated between His Majesty's Government and the constitution-making body

covering all necessary matters relating to the complete transfer of responsibility from British to Indian hands.

Whether or not an Indian State elects to adhere to the Constitution, it will be necessary to negotiate revised treaty arrangement, so far as this may be required in the new situation.

(d) The constitution-making body shall be composed as follows, unless the leaders of Indian opinion in the principal communities agree upon some other form before the end of hostilities.

Immediately upon the result being known of the provincial elections which will be necessary at the end of hostilities, the entire membership of the Lower Houses of the Provincial Legislature shall, as a single electoral college, proceed to the election of the constitution-making body by the system of proportional representation. This new body shall be in number about one-tenth of the number of the electoral college.

Indian states shall be invited to appoint representatives in the same proportion of the total population as the average for British India, and with the same powers as the British Indian members.

(e) While during the critical period which now faces India, and until the new Constitution can be framed His Majesty's Government must inevitably bear the full responsibility for India's defence, they desire and invite the immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the principal section of the Indian people in the counsels of their country, to give their active and constructive help in the discharge of a task so vital and essential for the future freedom of India.

In spite of a number of meetings of the War Cabinet, wherein the above draft was examined and revised, the letter and spirit of the draft were maintained and it formed the basis of Cripps's mission to India. On 9 March 1942 the War Cabinet met with Attlee in the chair and agreed 'on a revised paragraph 10', dealing with paragraph (e) of the declaration: 'This revised paragraph would form an essential part of instructions to the Lord Privy Seal [Stafford Cripps].' The paragraph reads as follows: 'You are authorised to negotiate with the leaders of principal section of Indian opinion on the basis of paragraph (e) of the "Statement of Policy" for the purpose of obtaining their immediate support for some scheme by which they can partake in the advisory or consultative manner in the counsels of their country. You may offer them, if you consider it wise or necessary, positions in the Executive Council provided this does not embarrass the defence and good government or the country during the present critical time. In relation to this matter, you will, no doubt, consult with the Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief and will bear in mind the supreme importance of

the military situation.'[77] The text of this annex was transmitted by Clausen to Turnbull, the secretary of Stafford Cripps, on 28 March 1942, through the Viceroy. In other words the Viceroy was fully apprised of the powers and functions of Stafford Cripps in India as the sole leader of the mission.

Stafford Cripps left for India on 14 March 1942 and reached Delhi on 23 March. After consultation with the Viceroy, commander-in-chief and members of the Viceroy's Executive Council, he began meeting Indian leaders from 25 March onwards. On 25 March he met Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Asaf Ali on behalf of the Congress and Jinnah on behalf of the Muslim League.

The notes kept by Cripps as a record of his interviews with various individuals were written mostly by him: the meetings were entirely confidential, without anybody else being present. His interview with Jinnah was interesting: 'I then gave him the document [the draft declaration] to read, and as I expected, he was substantially only concerned with the first part of the document, which I think rather surprised him in the distance I went to meet the Pakistan case.' Cripps also explained the difficulty of Bengal and the Punjab even though they were Muslim-majority provinces. As far as the composition of the Executive Council was concerned Jinnah said that 'the Viceroy should consult the Congress and himself regarding it and treat the Executive as a Cabinet rather than as the Executive under the constitution'.[78] The Viceroy later on tried to impress on Stafford Cripps that 'Jinnah might pretend that this comes a little hard on him. Sir Stafford replied that Jinnah had not accepted the scheme and probably would not if the Congress did not. He had no intention of elevating him above his present position.'[79]

Cripps maintained a busy schedule of interviews between 25 March and 2 April 1942, meeting representatives of a very broad spectrum of Indian opinion. He met Jinnah for the second time on 28 March; he found him 'most urbane and pleasant and came professedly to ask a few further questions and elucidation'. He met Gandhi on 27 March. The next day he met Rajagopalachari, Maulana Azad, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, M.R. Jayakar, Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, in addition to others like the members of the Hyderabad delegation and Hindu Mahasabha leaders. With Rajagopalachari he 'had an extremely interesting and very instructive talk'.[80] Sikander Hyat Khan informed Cripps in confidence that 'the Muslim League had accepted the proposals'.[81] The representatives of some of the princely states, notably Sir V.T. Krishnamachari, Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar and Sir Gopalaswamy Aiyar, expressed the view that the majority of states would join the first union, if the scheme was accepted. They 'did not think that there would be a second union since the Pakistan idea was not a practical one' and said that Muslims and Hindus would be able to arrive at a working arrangement.[82] Fazlul Haq was more concerned with the immediate situation and 'what was going to happen in Bengal' rather than

the future. He also made it quite clear that he had no intention of opposing Jinnah in any way either now or in the future and that, if it came to a showdown he would follow his leadership even if he disagreed with him.[83]

Similarly, Sir Mohammad Saadulla, Prime Minister of Assam, 'pointed out that if Bengal were to form a separate Dominion, the position of Assam will be a difficult one', which might affect the tea-producing business. He was not much concerned with any of the general lines of the scheme. Khan Bahadur Allah Baksh was concerned 'about the prospects of a breakdown by a non-acceptance by Congress, which obviously he thought was practically settled now'.[84] The Sikhs were deeply disturbed with the partition scheme and 'raised immediately the question of the protection of the Sikh minority and the possibility of having some redistribution of provincial power between the eastern and west Punjab in order to carve out a province in which the Sikhs should have a decisive balance between Hindus and Muslims'.[85] Cripps and the Sikh leaders – among them Baldev Singh, Ujjal Singh, Master Tara Singh and Sir Jogendra Singh – went through the document 'very carefully' and exchanged views with regard to the problem of exerting political pressure in the constitution-making process. Cripps hinted that Congress was likely to get a bare majority in the constitution-making body and that it would need the help of the Sikhs to push through measures of their concern. The Sikh minority, therefore, had a good chance of maintaining its point of view and hoped to secure protection. Also he assured them that the 'British Government would in carrying out the words of the document insist upon adequate protection for the Sikh minority and the protection would be guaranteed to the extent that is possible and if that were not given there would be a breach of the Treaty between the Dominion and the British Government and whatever action was appropriate could follow'. As for the immediate situation they raised the question of defence and suggested, 'in view of strong Indian public opinion an Indian Minister should be associated with Defence'. All major questions of strategy should remain with the commander-in-chief and the Viceroy, they said.[86]

The Muslim League and Jinnah were obviously pleased with the basic principles of the proposals. They thought they had been offered Pakistan. The main hurdle came from the Congress. Among the leaders with whom ideas were exchanged were Gandhi, Nehru, Azad, Asaf Ali, G.B. Pant, Rajagopalachari, B.G. Kher and R.S. Shukla; a number of meetings were held with Maulana Azad and Nehru. The questions relating to the partition proposals and non-accession clauses were discussed and the Congress was bound to reject them and they did so. As for the immediate problem of defence, it was discussed at great length and the partition proposals were kept at abeyance by common agreement. These discussions indicate why the Cripps mission failed. On the question of defence, of paramount importance at that time, it must be stressed that Cripps displayed a great

deal of statesmanship and flexibility and was determined to push through the negotiations to a logical and successful conclusion. The mission failed owing to conflict between the tory viewpoint and the Labour identity of interest with the Congress. The failure was masterminded by Lord Linlithgow, who sabotaged it at the most critical juncture when chances of success seemed certain. It was not the Congress or Gandhi, as was stated later, who were to blame for the Cripps fiasco.

Gandhi's interviews with Louis Fischer, held 4–8 June 1942, barely two months after the departure of the Cripps mission,[87] provided a more accurate understanding of Gandhi's views about the offer than those recorded by Stafford Cripps himself. Besides, writing in the *Harijan* on 19 April 1942 regarding 'that ill-fated proposal', as Gandhi called Cripps's proposals, he said that the 'Congress would not look at Dominion Status even though it carried the right of secession'. He objected that 'the proposal contemplated splitting of India into three parts, each having different ideas of governance. It contemplated Pakistan, and yet not the Pakistan of the Muslim League's conception. And last of all it gave no real control over defence to responsible ministers.' He ridiculed the idea of handing over the 'management of canteens' and 'printing of stationery' of the defence department to the control of the Indian member of defence. Gandhi was shrewd enough to recognize that Cripps 'had become part of the political machinery and unconsciously partook of its quality',[88] otherwise how could he have come to offer such a thing. Gandhi told Cripps when he met him: 'If this is your entire proposal to India, I would advise you to take the next plane home.' Cripps replied: 'I will consider that.'[89] Gandhi observed: 'It is very discouraging to us that the man who was a friend of Jawaharlal and had been interested in India should have made himself the bearer of this mission.'[90] Furthermore, Gandhi pointed out: 'we do not want any status conferred on us. If a status is conferred on us, it means we are not free. As to secession, there are big flaws. One of the chief flaws is the provision in the Cripps proposal regarding the Princes. The British maintain that they must protect the Princes, under treaties which they forced on the Princes for Britain's advantage.'[91]

On the question of Pakistan, Gandhi postulated: 'If the vast majority of Muslims regard themselves as a separate nation having nothing in common with Hindus, no power on earth can compel them to think otherwise. And if they want to partition India on that basis they must have the partition.' Louis Fischer told Gandhi that the leaders of the Congress and Muslim League did not even exchange greetings or talk to one another when they went to meet Cripps. Gandhi said, 'it was not only sad but disgraceful'.[92] At the same time he explained the position. Cripps arrived in India on 23 March 1942. Jinnah was then addressing a meeting in New Delhi celebrating 'Pakistan Day'. In the course of his speech, as was usual with him, he had denounced the Congress leadership as a 'Hindu

leadership' declaring at the same time: 'We cannot tolerate Muslims in the camp of enemy. Non-League Muslims are traitors in the enemy camp.' Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was then Congress President; Jinnah had publicly humiliated him saying that he was a 'show-boy' of the Congress. Who would have gone near Jinnah after listening to such a denunciation of the nationalist Muslims and the Congress leaders including Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajendra Prasad? In the same speech Jinnah had also said: 'if we have adopted an attitude of non-embarrassment towards British Government we know that if British Government are broken we are also in danger'.[93]

Gandhi related to Louis Fischer an incident indicating how difficult it was to deal with Jinnah. 'Shortly after the war broke out we were summoned to meet the Viceroy in New Delhi. Rajendra Prasad and I went to speak for Congress and Mr Jinnah for the Muslim League. I told Jinnah to confer with us in advance... We agreed to meet in Delhi, but when I suggested we both demand independence for India, he said "I do not want independence." We could not agree. I urged that we at least make the appearance of unity by going to the Viceroy together. I said he could go in my car or I would go in his. He consented to have me go in his car. But we spoke to the Viceroy in different tones and expressed different views.'[94] Gandhi went on to impress on Fischer: 'In actual life it is impossible to separate us into two nations. We are not two nations...' Fischer seemed to agree with Gandhi and informed him that Olaf Caroe and Evan Jenkins 'told me that there were no communal differences in the villages and heard from others too that the relations between the two religious communities are peaceful in the villages. If that is so that is very important because India is ninety per cent village.' Gandhi replied: 'It is so and that of course proves that the people are not divided. It proves that the politicians divide us.' In support of Gandhi's contention Louis Fischer read out a passage from the *Indian Statutory Commission Report*, volume one, that 'the Muslim people (from Sind, North-West Frontier Province, Baluchistan and the Punjab) are much less interested in separatism than leaders.'[95]

Reverting to the Cripps offer as an antidote to negation of popular support from Indians, Gandhi observed that 'Congress is more anti-British and anti-war than I am, and I have had to curb its desire to interfere with the war effort... I do not wish to humiliate the British. But the British must go.'[96] He argued that if India was granted independence now, 'that will help England win the war', implying thereby that India would support the British war effort wholeheartedly. Once India was granted independence, India would facilitate in every way the prosecution of war. For instance, 'a written agreement with England' could be signed. 'In addition Britain, America and other countries too, can keep their armies here and use Indian territory as a base for military operations. I do not want Japan to win the war. I do not want the Axis to win. But I am sure

that Britain cannot win unless India became free. Britain is weaker and Britain is morally indefensible while she rules India. I do not wish to humiliate England.'[97] Louis Fischer asked: 'But if India is to be used as a military base by the United Nations, many other things are involved. Armies do not exist in a vacuum. For instance, the United Nations would need good organization on the railroads.' Gandhi replied: 'Oh, they could operate the railroads. They would also need order in the ports where they received their supplies. They could not have riots in Bombay and Calcutta. These matters would require cooperation and common effort...A treaty of alliance could be signed.' Fischer asked: 'Why have you never said this? I must confess when I heard of your proposed civil disobedience movement I was prejudiced against it. I believed that it would impede the prosecution of the war...why have you not communicated your plan to the Viceroy? He should be told that you have no objection now in the use of India as a base for Allied military operation.' Gandhi replied: 'No one has asked me. I have written about my civil disobedience movement in order to prepare the public for it. If you put me some direct questions in writing about this matter, I will answer them in *Harijan*.'[98]

Gandhi's views about war and his cooperation with the British were authentically recorded and were placed in proper perspective by Fischer. But most of the members of the British Raj misinterpreted Gandhi: his ideas were not as destructive or impracticable as they were made out to be. His discussion of non-violent resistance to Japanese invasion should not have disturbed the rhythm of negotiations. Probably it was a purely academic issue. It was not part of any resolution of the Congress. Hence to put the blame on him for the failure of the Cripps mission would be wrong. Gandhi's views were neither as frivolous nor dogmatic as the officials of the government made them out to be. Gandhi's objection from the point of view of the Congress demand for independence was quite sound and the idea of independence was workable provided, of course, Jinnah and the British government agreed. Gandhi warned that the British were 'sitting on an unexploded mine in India and it may explode any day. The hatred and resentment against the British are so strong here that Britain can get no help for her war effort. Indians enlist in the British army because they want to eat, but they have no feeling in their hearts which would make them wish to help England.'[99]

Goodbye Mr Cripps: Linlithgow–Cripps row

It was not Gandhi who thwarted the mission, as Cripps put it. Nor did it fail, as Stanley Wolpert seemed to believe, owing to 'the miasma of Indian complexity, ambiguity, and transcendental doubt'.[100] The Cripps mission foundered on the bedrock of Linlithgow's hostility and the altered environment, especially in the USA, after the sincerity of the British desire

for a settlement was proved. In his personal, secret telegram to Cripps, sent on 11 April 1942 at 3.15 am, Churchill wrote: 'You have done everything in human power and your tenacity, perseverance and resourcefulness have proved how great was the British desire to reach a settlement. You must not feel unduly discouraged or disappointed by the result. The effect throughout Britain and in the United States, has been wholly beneficial.'[101] Once Churchill believed that the British commitment had been proved to President Roosevelt he supported Linlithgow's rigid views and brought about an end to the dialogue with Indian leaders. There was no question of ambiguity or transcendental attitude on the part of the Indians wrecking the discussions. Cripps withdrew the moment he realized that Linlithgow would not allow him to finalize any matter concerning the formation of the national government, the Indianization of the Executive Council or the handing over of the defence portfolio to the Indian minister of the Viceroy's Executive Council. Furthermore Cabinet responsibility could not be offered to the Indians although, right at the beginning of his talks with the Congress leaders, Cripps had raised hopes in that direction by his statement that it was hoped that the Indians would be offered a truly responsible government at the centre. Both Cripps and the British government backed out of their earlier stand, and that was the most important reason for the failure of the mission.

Let us take a closer look at what Cripps had offered in respect of the formation of the national government and the Executive Council. It should be remembered that the Cripps mission had raised hopes of a real breakthrough in constitutional advance in India. According to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, as pointed out in his letter to Cripps on 11 April, Cripps had told him at the first meeting itself that 'there would be a National Government which will function as a Cabinet and the position of the Viceroy would be analogous to that of the King of England *vis-à-vis* his Cabinet'.[102] This matter later on became a subject of great controversy. When the Viceroy asked Cripps if he had assured the Indian leaders about the national government and the Viceroy's council functioning as a Cabinet he denied having said that; he accepted having used the expression 'national government' but did not say that it would function as 'Cabinet government'.[103] This matter became an explosive issue between the Viceroy and Stafford Cripps, the Viceroy going to the length of asking the War Cabinet whether Cripps had not overstepped his Cabinet brief.

Sir Stafford Cripps was a well-intentioned man. He took upon himself the most difficult task of gaining the support of the Congress by offering a constitutional scheme which was not without flaws. He must have known of those flaws but he had to follow the instructions of the War Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Winston Churchill although he was permitted to use his discretion. Reginald Coupland, who stayed behind in India to help Cripps in his mission, recorded in his diary after he had met him

on 26 March 1942: 'He [Cripps] put his desire for Indian freedom first, all personal risk second.'[104] Cripps was also an adroit politician, his negotiating skills were superb. Even his adversary Linlithgow praised him for handling 'a difficult and wearing job with outstanding skill, courage and insight. I have watched his technique with interest and admiration and hope I have learnt a little in the process!'[105] But Linlithgow did not have much chance of using what he had learnt in negotiating with Indian leaders. Cripps was also a man of ambition, as all politicians are. He wanted to succeed and he acted as if he was an accredited 'plenipotentiary', appointed by the War Cabinet with the mission to arrive at a solution by providing a breakthrough in the political deadlock. In the first flush of enthusiasm, having had the support of the Conservative government led by Winston Churchill and the Labour Party whose leader Clement Attlee was the Deputy Prime Minister, he was determined to push ahead with his negotiations, and while doing so he might well have exceeded in some way the Cabinet brief. His singular ambition was to resolve the problem. If he had succeeded he would have emerged as a national figure of great eminence in England. He is reported to have said: 'I told Nehru that if they accepted my terms I should be such a Tremendous Figure in England that I could do anything.'[106] A.D.K. Owen, a Welsh socialist, observed that 'if he brought this settlement off, Cripps would certainly replace Winston'.[107]

There is no doubt that Cripps mentioned in his negotiations with Indian leaders that the Executive Council of the Viceroy would function as a Cabinet in the event of Indians forming a national government. Aware that the Congress would not even look at the offer unless it was promised something spectacular in regard to transfer of real power and responsibility to Indian hands, Cripps might have offered 'something big' to win over the Congress on his side. Cripps was known to be a friend of Jawaharlal Nehru. In fact Amery once complained that Cripps had merely 'swallowed all Nehru's ideas'[108] and had spelled them out in his earlier effort in September–December 1939 to gain support of the tory government on the issue of the declaration of the war aims. Owing to the studied hostility and contempt of Linlithgow and Lord Zetland, then Secretary of State for India, the Labour initiative had failed to achieve results.

Jawaharlal Nehru, in his book *The Discovery of India* stated: 'There was even mention of the Viceroy functioning merely as a constitutional head like the King of England. This led us to imagine that the only issue that remained for consideration was that of defence.' Hence Congress leaders mostly talked of matters relating to defence.[109] In his interview with Jinnah held on 25 March 1942, Cripps's notes clearly mention that Jinnah did not visualize 'any insuperable difficulty' in respect of 'the composition of the Executive Council... provided the Viceroy should consult the Congress and himself' and 'would treat the Executive Council as a Cabinet rather than as the Executive according to the Constitution'.[110] It is quite clear

from Cripps's notes that the Executive Council's function as the Cabinet did come up for discussion with Jinnah. It is not clear, however, what Cripps had offered in this connection.

On 29 March 1942, Cripps held a press conference in New Delhi, during which a question relating to Cabinet government was posed: 'Will it be proper to assume that His Excellency the Governor-General, so to speak, Indianize the non-Indianized departments at the Centre with the exception of Defence?' Cripps replied: 'It is not obligatory of the Governor-General. All we did is to give him a general direction. The object of the scheme is to give the fullest measure of government to the Indian people at the present time consistent with the present with the possibilities of a constitution which cannot be changed until the end of the War.'[111] To the question 'What will be the position of the Central Legislature?' Cripps answered: 'You cannot change the constitution. All you can do is to change the conventions of the Constitution. *You can turn the Executive Council into a Cabinet*.'[112] In the course of his answer to another question Cripps went on to explain: 'All I can say is the general direction which has been laid down by the War Cabinet in this scheme. The principle of the formation of the Government of India is in the rest of the paragraph. The leaders of the principal section of the Indian people are to be invited to play their full and effective part which means to say that the intention of this document is as far as possible subject to the reservation of defence to put power into the hands of Indian leaders.'[113] Cripps complimented the press 'for the high degree of accuracy of such reports' in the next press conference he held on 31 March 1942: 'a great credit to the Press of India and I doubt whether any other press conference in any other country would have got so loyal and accurate a report'.[114] Thus the veracity of the press reports could not be questioned, and to all intents and purposes Cripps did give Indians ample reasons to entertain high hopes of changing the national government into a Cabinet form of government. There was no mistaking the intentions of Cripps in this regard. Both the Congress as well as the Viceroy must have understood the views of Cripps quite clearly. There was no ambiguity in it whatsoever. In the context of Indian political demands national government meant only a representative government empowered to run the government except in the field of defence and which obviously would be responsible to the elected legislature. It was natural that the Viceroy would object to these declarations in the strongest possible terms; he did and so ended Cripps's negotiations with the Indian leaders.

On 6 April 1942, Linlithgow wrote to Amery in a telegram marked 'most immediate Private and Personal': '(For your own and Prime Minister's information.) The vital test of Cabinet Government, namely responsibility to an Indian Legislature does not and cannot exist in the interim period. The constitutional responsibility of the Governor-General-in-Council

must remain to Parliament. The Governor-General must retain his power of overriding the Executive Council, and the Secretary of State his powers of direction and control over the Governor-General.'[115] On the same day Amery wrote to Cripps conveying the War Cabinet's decision: 'the constitutional position of the Viceroy in Council ... cannot be altered in present circumstances. The position is and must remain that the Viceroy-in-Council acts as a collective body responsible to the Secretary of State ... and subject to the Viceroy's special powers and duties under Sections 40 and 41 of Ninth Schedule of Act. There should be no misunderstanding between you and Indian political leaders on this point.'[116] With this telegram the War Cabinet commanded Stafford Cripps to negotiate within the parameters of the constitution laid down in the Government of India Act 1935, especially in regard to the position and powers of the Governor-General-in-Council. P.G. Pinnell, private secretary to the Viceroy, noted on 6 April 1942 that the 'Prime Minister had seized hold of the reference to Cabinet Government in Sir Stafford Cripps's telegrams (possibly owing to attention having been drawn to them by H.E.'s telegram)'. In fact Stafford Cripps had sought Prime Minister Churchill's approval to a number of suggestions made in his telegram of 4 April 1942 (via Viceroy and India Office). One of his suggestions stated: 'Under the new arrangement whereby the Executive Council will approximate to a Cabinet presumably any question, coming within the competence of the Government of India as defined in the amended clause (e) will be for decision of the Government of India as a whole and not by any particular Minister.'[117] It was obvious that Cripps contemplated a national government with a Cabinet which would perform its functions with a sense of collective Cabinet responsibility.

Owing to Cripps's pronouncements, his relations with Linlithgow became soured. Linlithgow complained to Amery in his telegram of 5 April that Cripps's proposals would result in 'eventual breakdown' of Governor-General's position which was being threatened 'by his [Cripps's] continued presence here'. He wrote: 'it would be essential from the point of view of the Governor-General that the eventual breakdown should happen while Cripps was still present. On the other hand if his continued presence here should amount to assuming or appearing to assume for the time being the functions of the Governor-General, I can conceive that circumstances might well arise in which it would be difficult for the same Governor-General to reassume them.'[118] The explosive missives from the Viceroy ended Cripps's moves to restrict the powers and functions of the Viceroy. The decisions of the War Cabinet which were conveyed to Cripps implied that the 'loose employment' of terms such as 'Indian Cabinet'[119] must be avoided. In the final analysis, therefore, it can be safely concluded that Maulana Azad's contention that Cripps had offered, right at the beginning of his discussions, the hope of a national government with full powers enjoyed by Cabinet government was correct.

There was yet another problem to contend with, and that was Colonel Johnson's intervention in the ongoing discussion on defence matters between Cripps and Jawaharlal Nehru. As the negotiations progressed, the discussions centred on defence within the framework of the formation of national government. It was believed that Indian participation in the war effort could be facilitated further through the appointment of a national government comprising representatives from the political parties and other interests. It was also thought appropriate to entrust the task of defence to an Indian representative member of the Viceroy's Council, in order to make Indians feel that they were essential elements in the prosecution of war. The most thorny aspects of Cripps's proposals, namely partition, the non-accession provisions of the plan, maintenance of the sanctity of British treaty obligations with the princes and so on were kept in the background. There was a tacit understanding among all those involved in the process of negotiations to keep those issues in abeyance. Cripps was greatly surprised to find that every one of the interviewees was most concerned with the defence-related issues and emphasized the need for an Indian representative to discharge the functions of a defence minister. With the Japanese successes in the Pacific, the Far East and south-east Asia, especially after the capture of Singapore on 15 February and fall of Rangoon on 8 March, the threat to India's security seemed real. Everyone in India was willing to help the British war effort, provided the British trusted Indians with responsibility. Jawaharlal Nehru observed that 'the Congress position at this stage was that in view of the imminent war peril to India, they were prepared to put aside questions of the future and concentrate on the formation of a National Government which would cooperate fully in the war'. While the Congress did not agree to 'the specific British proposals', they thought 'they need not come in the way of finding a method for present cooperation'.[120]

President Roosevelt was also deeply concerned with the political impasse in India and advised Winston Churchill that everything possible should be done to secure the support of Indians and Congress, the largest political party of India. General Chiang-Kai-Shek's visit to India was specifically designed to emphasize the need to get Congress support for the war effort. It was against this background that Colonel Louis Johnson was sent to New Delhi, as the personal representative of President Roosevelt, so that he could offer his good offices in resolving the deadlock. Stafford Cripps was highly appreciative of the role of Colonel Johnson in the negotiation process and said so to Winston Churchill. But Linlithgow's obstructionist attitude ruined the chances of success in the negotiations at a most crucial stage, when everyone hoped for a breakthrough and an agreement with the Congress on defence matters was almost reached.

Based on his interviews with leaders of different political parties as well as others representing the interests of the princes, the minorities,

the European community, commerce and industry, Cripps realized that responsibility for defence war a crucial issue: most recommended that an Indian defence minister should share the burden of the War Department in some significant way. Nehru's discussion with Colonel Johnson was reassuring when he said that the appointment of an Indian as a defence minister 'would in no way involve interference with the control of operations or in the field'.[121] Cripps agreed and sought the approval of the Prime Minister on 29 March 1942: 'It looks at the moment pretty certain that the critical issue will arise tomorrow, Sunday, on the question of Defence responsibility. I have made it clear that under no circumstances can we give up any of the responsibility for the Defence of India. A very considerable number of persons and interests have on the other hand stressed the need to raise the keenness of Indians to defend their country.' Cripps wanted the following paragraph in lieu of the first portion of paragraph (e): 'During the critical period which now faces India and until the new constitution can be framed His Majesty's Government must inevitably bear the full responsibility for and retain the ultimate control and direction of the Defence of India as part of their world war effort, but the task of organizing to the full the military moral and material resources of India must be the responsibility of the Government of India with the cooperation of the peoples of India.'[122] This implied some division of responsibility between India and Great Britain. It was thought feasible to allow the Indian defence minister to handle certain functions of the War Department without interfering in the affairs or undermining the authority of the commander-in-chief. Amery pointed out to Linlithgow on 3 April that the division of defence 'between administrative' and 'operational side' could be carried out 'giving the former to Indian'. He went on to explain that 'that is the correct division of functions in all the continental armies and indeed very largely here [in England] today'.[123]

Lord Linlithgow softened his attitude to the transfer of authority in matters of defence by saying, 'given the present state of world opinion on the subject, the Commander-in-Chief and I feel that no very serious risks are involved in setting up and handing over to an Indian Minister of Council a portfolio of Defence Coordination . . . *along with such other non-essential functions* of present Defence Department as Wavell thinks he can safely include in new portfolio. But we are both satisfied that in existing circumstances it is not (repeat not) possible to take away from Commander-in-Chief the substance of the Defence portfolio as now held by him *in order to entrust it to a representative Indian*.'[124] Linlithgow and Wavell were opposed to losing any power, except relating to 'non-essential functions' of the defence department 'to a representative Indian'. But this kind of allocation of functions was not likely to please any one, least of all the Congress. They had asked for a national government and the defence minister's functions must be commensurate with national dignity. It was

at such a critical juncture that Colonel Johnson's intervention came in, which did not please Linlithgow at all.

Although Linlithgow was edgy about the bifurcation of the defence portfolio, he was not totally opposed to Amery's advice that the division of defence between the 'administrative' and 'operational' sides was natural enough. In spite of reservations in some quarters, Cripps had informed Maulana Azad on 7 April that responsibilities for public relations, demobilization and post-war reconstruction, the petroleum officer (concerned with procurement, storage and distribution), amenities and welfare of troops, canteen organization, stationery, printing, reception and so on could be under the Indian defence minister.[125] Since these departments were considered inconsequential, discussion proceeded to include in the Indian minister's domain other activities. Colonel Louis Johnson emerged around this time of the negotiation process and the trio – Cripps, Nehru and Johnson – were involved in sorting out the issues. On 6 April, Johnson had already apprised Olaf Caroe, representing the government, of the details of his talks with Jawaharlal Nehru, who had assured him that the functions of the Indian defence minister 'would in no way involve interference with the control of operations or in the field'. Johnson seemed satisfied with Nehru's assurance that the authority of the commander-in-chief would remain unimpaired. Johnson also complimented 'Nehru's charm of manner, grasp of history and logic, and wide intellectual gifts'.[126] So far no objection of any kind was raised by Linlithgow or his advisers.

On 8 April Johnson and Cripps met the Viceroy, first separately and later together. Linlithgow informed Cripps that he 'had not had time to examine the formula brought for him by Mr Hodson'. Nor had 'his advisers had time fully to examine it'. Linlithgow, however, objected to 'the allocation of disputed subjects as between the Defence and War Departments', and told Cripps that 'this was a serious invasion of the Governor-General's power in allocating functions to Departments'. Cripps pointed out that 'it was better that His Majesty's Government should decide disputes, if only because Congress should suspect the Viceroy being biased in favour of the Commander-in-Chief'.[127]

Linlithgow further observed that he was 'nervous about the list of functions to go to the War Department'. Cripps pointed out that the list of subjects for the War Department 'was my own [Linlithgow's] list' as drafted by Hodson and Ogilvie. Linlithgow would not relent and shot back 'that this did not justify presenting it to Congress in changed trappings'.[128] Had Linlithgow not been Viceroy the matter would have been solved there and then, but Linlithgow's bias against the Congress, first and foremost, was most pronounced. He felt as if the whole viceregal edifice would crumble if the prestige of the Viceroy was undermined in any way. If he had had the interests of India and Great Britain in mind, he would not have been so vociferous in his objection to the moves of Cripps and Johnson.

Any other person would perhaps have welcomed the successful conclusion of the negotiations. Besides, the very name of Nehru seemed to upset Linlithgow; he was so hostile to Nehru that the Viceroy would not meet him after his last meeting on 4 October 1939. He believed that these three musketeers were determined to put the Viceroy's office to shame!

Let us follow the dialogue between Stafford Cripps and Lord Linlithgow when they met on 8 April 1942. Linlithgow's record of conversation states the following:

> Sir Stafford Cripps then said that he thought the Congress would come in on the formula and Johnson had gathered that from them. I asked how Congress had come to know of this formula, Cripps replied that Johnson had shown it to them . . . I at once protested against Congress having been shown the draft and said the fact that Johnson had shown it to them made the position all the worse given the USA position in the business. If I were to differ from the draft, my position night well be rendered intolerable, as I ran the risk of being held up to the USA as the obstacle to the settlement. Cripps then said that matters reached a climax in which something had to be done about it and generally glazed over the incident.

Linlithgow was in for another shock. After some discussion with Johnson, he was informed that 'the Congress was going to settle, and on this formula'. Linlithgow enquired 'when they are going to consider the new formula'. Colonel Johnson replied 'tonight – they are on it now – the formula on which I agreed with Sir Stafford Cripps this evening'. After the departure of Colonel Johnson and Cripps, Linlithgow called Cripps back alone and his records mention their conversation: 'I made a further and direct complaint about the manner in which I and the Commander-in-Chief had been passed over. We had neither of us had any opportunity of examining the formula before it had been shown to Colonel Johnson and to the Congress Working Committee. Cripps said that the situation was getting hot and he had to do something.' On Cripps saying that 'Hodson had seen the formula', Linlithgow shot back: 'Mr Hodson was not the Governor-General and . . . the Commander-in-Chief had not seen it.'[129]

That is how the acrimonious dialogue came to an end, and the chance of agreement of the formula. As far as the formula was concerned there was nothing new or spectacular in it; it merely defined the jurisdiction of the two departments created out of defence. The commander-in-chief was left totally free on the conduct of war: he would be 'in control of the armed forces in India and . . . the member of the Executive Council in charge of the War Department'. The defence minister, in addition to the Defence Coordination Department, would have some more responsibilities but,

as Cripps pointed out that, 'transfer in form of Defence Department is essential feature of the formula'.

The tory betrayal and the failure of the mission

On 9 April, Linlithgow informed Amery about the Cripps and Johnson formula; Johnson had discussed it with Lord Wavell and there was a chance of its acceptance by Nehru. However, Linlithgow thought it was 'designed to drive a wedge between His Majesty's government and USA' by these 'latest Congress manoeuvres'. He also informed Amery of his 'own strong feeling of grievance' in being 'passed over' by the negotiators; the formula was 'restrictive' in character and it 'cuts across position of the Governor-General'. On all these matters, including the manner of Colonel Johnson's intervention as personal representative of President Roosevelt, he sought 'the wish of the Cabinet and would welcome earliest possible instructions'.[130] David Monteath of the India Office examined the Viceroy's comments and pointed out the 'bringing of His Majesty's Government direct for the solution of disputes violates S.313 of the Act which provides that the executive authority in India is vested in the Governor-General-in-Council. This appears to be a fundamental constitutional change.' Also he upheld the Viceroy's view that the formula was 'restrictive' and pointed out other discrepancies relating to the division of functions in the defence department.[131]

On the same day, at 11.10 am, Prime Minister Winston Churchill informed Stafford Cripps through a 'personal, secret, most immediate' telegram: 'You must not commit us in any way' in respect of the formula. Another telegram was sent that day, at 1.20 pm, to Cripps by the Prime Minister informing him that 'Col. Johnson is not President Roosevelt's personal representative in any manner outside the specific mission dealing with Indian munitions and kindred topics on which he was sent. I feel sure President would be vexed if he, the President, were to be seen to be drawn into the Indian constitutional issue. His message to me just received from Mr Hopkins, who is with me, as I write, was extremely opposed to anything like US intervention or mediation.'[132] Thus, Linlithgow's complaints had the desired effect and the entire effort of Cripps in finding a solution almost ended with these missives from the Prime Minister. On 9 April, at 4 pm, yet another telegram was sent by the War Cabinet to Cripps: 'War Cabinet deeply sympathises with difficulties of your task but is greatly concerned to find that latest formula was provided to Nehru and to Working Committee without previous knowledge and approval of Viceroy and Wavell.' The Cabinet also wanted to know 'what is meant by allusions to a National Government as though the members of it would be all Indians'.[133]

The triumphant Viceroy Linlithgow wrote to Cripps on 9 April informing him of his message received from the Secretary of State for India: 'Before

your interview this afternoon, I think I should draw your attention that the constitution of the Viceroy's cabinet cannot be altered and the emphasis laid by the War Cabinet on the necessity of avoiding misunderstanding between yourself and Indian political leaders on this point.'[134] Cripps was thus told that he had erred; and he could not receive any support for his proposals from the War Cabinet and the Prime Minister. Did Cripps meet Maulana Azad on the afternoon of 9 April? From the records, as reflected in the *Transfer of Power* volume on Cripps Mission, Cripps did not seem to have kept his appointment with Maulana Azad on that day. Had he met him, he would have left a record of his talks as had been the practice. It is important to note that for all practical purposes, his negotiations with the Congress leaders were over on 9 April 1942 itself.

Stafford Cripps made a final effort to win Prime Minister Churchill's support. He sent a telegram to the War Cabinet on 10 April 1942 explaining and clarifying each point regarding the national government, composition of the Executive Council, the defence formula and so on.[135] The same day he telegrammed Churchill, emphasising: 'If Congress agrees to come into National Government I feel confident that Muslim League will do so also.'[136] It is important to bear in mind that Jinnah had welcomed the formation of a national government in his first meeting with Cripps on 25 March 1942. Cripps stated that Jinnah did not visualize 'any insuperable difficulty... in respect of the composition of the Executive Council as a Cabinet rather than as the Executive according to Constitution'.[137] He also expressed his view that the Viceroy should ask the Congress and himself about the personnel of the Executive Council. Throughout the discussion on the Cripps–Johnson–Nehru defence formula it was presumed, based on Jinnah's tacit understanding, that the communal question was to be kept at abeyance; defence, being of urgent and paramount importance, took the centre-stage in the negotiations. It was also believed that Jinnah was willing to come into the government on the basis of the formula. Linlithgow seems to have been aware of these developments. In his letter of 14 April 1942 to Amery, after the breakdown of negotiations, Linlithgow said: 'writing for your own eye that I was left with the strong impression that Cripps in his extreme anxiety to meet Congress claims and to secure the support from them which might have resulted in securing the support of other parties, may have taken chances, which were dangerous...'[138] The point to note is that the successful completion of negotiations with the Congress was most likely to result 'in securing the support of other parties', which did not exclude the Muslim League.

But time was running out for Cripps: while he was busy sending his explanations, he received three telegrams from the Prime Minister and the War Cabinet on 10 April 1942, dashing hopes of a settlement. On that day Cripps wired Winston Churchill (via Viceroy and India Office) that his

talks had failed stating that 'Congress is unable to accept proposals', and that he would leave for home on Sunday 12 April 1942.[139] The tory victory in destroying the agreement was celebrated by the warm send-off given to Cripps: Linlithgow said he was so keen to say 'Good bye, Mr Cripps!'[140]

Who or what was responsible for such a fiasco and the mission's failure? Stafford Cripps himself; Lord Linlithgow's obduracy; Prime Minister Winston Churchill's lack of vision; or all three of them working against one another? Stafford Cripps heroically defended himself on 28 April 1942 on the floor of the House of Commons, squarely blaming the Congress for the failure of his mission. But before we look at what he said in Parliament, it is interesting to watch closely the *grande finale* of the Cripps drama as enacted in the War Cabinet meetings on 10 April 1942.

The Cripps mission was a dismal failure, and it ended in a fiasco. With all his good intentions, outstanding negotiating skills and great intellectual acumen and abilities, Cripps failed to secure full support for his proposals from the War Cabinet at home and the Viceroy in India. Lord Linlithgow was a diehard tory, who was decidedly hostile and antagonistic to Stafford Cripps's proposals; and to an extent in his personal behaviour he was extremely impolite towards Cripps. What the Indians thought of Linlithgow is aptly summed up by Jawaharlal Nehru in his *Discovery of India*:

> Over the top of the imperial structure sat the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, surrounded by all the pomp and ceremony befitting his high position. Heavy of body and slow of mind, solid as a rock and with almost a rock's lack of awareness, possessing the qualities and failings of an old-fashioned British aristocrat, he sought with integrity and honesty of purpose to find a way out of the tangle. But his limitations were too many; his mind worked in the old groove and shrank back from any innovations; his vision was limited by the traditions of the ruling class out of which he came; he saw and heard through the eyes and ears of the Civil Service and others who surrounded him; he distrusted people who talked of fundamental political and social changes; he disliked those who did not show a becoming appreciation of the high mission of the British Empire and its chief representative in India.[141]

He had a closed mind. He did not trust even Stafford Cripps; his novel approaches and ideas were unacceptable to him. Without the knowledge of Cripps and behind his back he sent a series of telegrams raising objections to his moves to the Secretary of State for India and the Prime Minister. He appealed against infringement of his powers; complained that the smooth functioning of his government had been undermined, and that the atmosphere had been vitiated by the very presence of Stafford Cripps

in New Delhi. He reported to the Prime Minister through the Secretary of State that Cripps had arrogated to himself the powers of the Governor-General and if he was not stopped it would be difficult for him 'to reassume' those powers.[142]

For Winston Churchill the Cripps mission had one objective. It was to win political mileage in the USA and to mollify British public opinion, which had been disturbed, especially after the spectacular successes of the Japanese in south-east Asia. By sending Stafford Cripps to India with a proposal, he wished to silence his critics. Left to himself he would not have sought the support of the Indian National Congress for the war effort, as he wrote to Clement Attlee on 7 January 1942 from American soil: 'I hope my colleagues will realize the danger of the constitutional issue, still more of making constitutional changes at a moment when enemy is upon the frontier. The idea that we should get more out of India by putting the Congress in charge at this juncture seems ill-founded... Bringing hostile political element into the defence machine will paralyse action... The Indian troops are fighting splendidly but it must be remembered that their allegiance is to the King Emperor; and that the rule of the Congress and Hindu priesthood machine would never be tolerated by a fighting race.'[143] Winston Churchill's preconceived notions and bias against the Congress are well reflected here. For one thing, the Indian army was constituted of all communities and not only 'the fighting race', by which he meant Muslims. The Indian army in 1942 was composed of Hindus, 52 per cent; Muslims, 37 per cent; Sikhs, 8 per cent; other social groups including the Depressed Classes being the rest.[144]

When Churchill began receiving information regarding the impending failure of Cripps mission he was not unduly disturbed. He gave full attention to Linlithgow's complaints. The meeting of the War Cabinet committee held on 10 April, which considered several telegrams received from the Viceroy, felt that 'the Governor-General's position in regard to his powers, and duties under section 41 of the 9th schedule had been compromised during the negotiations. It appeared that the Congress leaders had been informed by the Lord Privy Seal [Sir Stafford Cripps] that while there was to be no change in the constitution, he [the Lord Privy Seal] assumed that the Governor-General would meet the point by means of a convention.'[145] The committee recorded: 'no such proposal had ever been made, or indeed, contemplated in the discussions before the Lord Privy Seal had left this country'.[146] The committee decided that the Prime Minister should send a 'private and personal' telegram to Stafford Cripps; while the War Cabinet should send another to the Viceroy. The telegram to the Viceroy, sent at 10 pm on 10 April, assured him that 'there can be no question of any convention limiting in any way your powers under the existing constitution'. It also stated: 'we are puzzled as to what Lord Privy Seal means by the Viceroy being one party to the dispute'.[147]

Prime Minister Winston Churchill's telegram to Stafford Cripps, sent on 10 April 1942 at 9 pm, began with a tragi-comic statement: 'There can be no question of want of confidence and we sympathise with you in your difficulties but we have our responsibilities as well as you. We feel that in your natural desire to reach a settlement with Congress you may have been drawn into positions far different from any the Cabinet and Ministers of Cabinet rank approved before you set forth.'[148] It was a severe indictment of Cripps for overstepping his powers. The Prime Minister went on to impress that the Viceroy would not be responsible 'for any working difficulties' which the government might have to face. Also he pointed out bluntly: 'We have been told nothing about the character and composition of the new Council or National Government you think should be formed. We do not know whether the Home Department or Finance are to be placed in the hands of Congress nominees.'[149] Churchill almost remonstrated: 'We are concerned about the Viceroy's position . . . and we must definitely reject suggestion of a convention which would restrict [his powers].' Last but not the least important was Churchill's criticism of Cripps's handling of the whole affair in the name of 'negotiations'. Churchill told him: 'In your para 13 you speak of carrying on negotiations. It was certainly agreed between us that there were not to be negotiations but that you were to try to gain acceptance with possibly minor variations or elaborations of our great offer which has made so powerful an impression here and throughout the United States. As a fair-minded man you will I am sure try to realize how difficult it is for us to see where our duty lies amid all those novel proposals and in the absence of clear and simple explanations.'[150] There could be nothing worse than this. Such a strong display of displeasure shown against Cripps's methods and his arrogation of the powers of a plenipotentiary, which he was not, could not have mollified Cripps. He withdrew from his talks with the leaders, declaring that the talks had failed.

On the day Cripps received the Prime Minister's rebuke, he sent a 'most-immediate telegram', stating that there was 'no hope of agreement and I shall start home on Sunday', 12 April 1942. According to Cripps, 'Main ground of rejection is however that in view of Congress there should be immediately a National Government and that without constitutional changes there should be definite assurances in conversations which would indicate that the new Government would function as a free Government and the members of which would act as members of a Cabinet in a constitutional government.' The rejection of the Congress was in 'widest grounds'. And not solely on the defence issue. The Congress accepted the position that 'the Commander-in-Chief should have freedom to control conduct of war and connected activities', yet the functions of the defence minister as proposed were 'unduly restricted'.[151]

It is clear that there was ample scope for an amicable agreement between the Congress and Cripps. The agreement could not be finalized

because of the rejection by the War Cabinet of, first, the idea of a national government for India with full powers of a Cabinet system of government during the interim period of war or an assurance to that effect for the future and, second, the defence formula. The failure of the Cripps mission was therefore caused, to a considerable extent, by the attitude of the War Cabinet and its refusal to back the proposals of Cripps, however unauthorized they had been.

It must be pointed out that Sir Stafford Cripps was harshly treated by the Prime Minister. Either Churchill was misled or it was his own characteristic impetuosity which was responsible for his unkind, unfeeling and imperious behaviour. Cripps was accused of exceeding the Cabinet brief in attempting to weaken the position of the Viceroy on the one hand and offering a national government in India without the prior approval of the War Cabinet on the other. He was even pulled up for 'carrying on negotiations'. He was reminded by Winston Churchill, ironically and naively it would seem, that he had not been sent 'to negotiate' but 'for personal consultation', for 'elaboration' and 'clarification', and that he was expected merely to sell the proposals to the Indians saying, as it were, either you take it or leave it. That certainly was not the spirit of the Cabinet brief, and Winston Churchill was wrong. All through the correspondence and discussions, inside the War Cabinet and outside, Amery, Linlithgow and even their advisers had been using the terms 'negotiation' and 'discussion'. Cripps was to a great extent correct and was within his powers to talk, discuss, negotiate and arrive at a settlement. He could not have come to terms with the parties on vital questions affecting their future without discussions or negotiations. More importantly, he had gone to India as the representative of His Majesty's Government to seek support not only for the defence of India from the Indian political parties, but also for general support of the British war effort. Surely, after a couple of years of the 'nothing doing' attitude from the government of India, and 'there was nothing to be done' policy advocated by Churchill, Amery and Linlithgow, Cripps did not go all the way to India to clarify or elaborate their 'reactionary proposals'. It was to the great credit of Stafford Cripps that he had succeeded in bringing about an agreement on 'the defence formula' which was rejected at the last moment, not by the Congress leaders including Nehru, but by Linlithgow and Churchill. The tory attitude was clear at this juncture. It appeared as if they never wanted Cripps to succeed. Nehru was quite right in his conjecture at a press conference on 12 April 1942: 'It might be that Sir Stafford Cripps had been pulled up by his senior partner in England or some one here.'[152]

A close look at the War Cabinet proceedings reveals that Stafford Cripps had 'the fullest confidence' of all the members of the War Cabinet, as observed by the Prime Minister at the meeting of the War Cabinet W.M. (42) on 9 March 1942. They were 'indebted to him', for graciously

agreeing to 'visit India and discuss matters with the leaders of the main Indian political parties'. He further declared: 'The Lord Privy Seal [Stafford Cripps] would take with him the draft Declaration as the plan which he would discuss with the leaders of Indian opinion, with a view to seeing whether it met with the measure of acceptance vital to its success.'[153] The same day the War Cabinet committee on India, I (42), met with Clement Attlee in the chair at 1 pm in Attlee's room at 11 Downing Street. Those present at the meeting were Viscount Simon, Sir John Anderson, Sir Leopold Amery, Sir James Grigg, Sir Stafford Cripps and Sir Edwardes Bridges (secretary). At this meeting 'the essential part of the instructions to the Lord Privy Seal [Cripps]' was agreed upon. It stated as follows: 'You are authorised to negotiate with the leaders of the principal sections of Indian opinion on the basis of paragraph I (e) of the "Statement of Policy" for the purpose of obtaining their immediate support for some scheme by which they can partake in the advisory or consultative manner in the counsels of their country. You may offer them, if you consider it wise or necessary, position in the Executive Council, provided this does not embarrass the defence and good government of the country during the present critical time. In relation to this matter you will, no doubt, consult with the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief, and will bear in mind the supreme importance of the military situation.'[154] The text of the instructions was transmitted by Claussen through the Viceroy to Turnbull, who was then functioning as secretary to Sir Stafford Cripps in India, during the mission on 28 March 1942.[155]

Thus it was obvious that Cripps was empowered to 'negotiate' with leaders of Indian opinion and 'offer them', if he considered it 'wise or necessary, 'position in the Executive Council'. It was hoped that he would 'consult with' the Viceroy and the commander-in-chief: it was not obligatory on his part to do so. Then why this confusion in regard to Cripps's powers as the leader of the mission and sole representative of the War Cabinet? It also is important to bear in mind that the text incorporating instructions to Cripps was neither amended nor withdrawn by the War Cabinet, which was the competent authority to do so, and it was duly conveyed to the Viceroy.

It is true that the Prime Minister, in his statement on the floor of the House of Commons on 11 March 1942, said that 'a Member of the War Cabinet to India' was being sent 'to satisfy himself upon the spot by personal consultation that the declaration upon which we are agreed... will achieve its purpose'.[156] On 10 March 1942, Prime Minister Churchill informed the Viceroy that 'he [Cripps] is bound by the draft declaration which is our utmost limit'.[157] It is possible that Winston Churchill, troubled as he was by several complaints from the Viceroy that Cripps had been responsible for 'invasion' of his power and position, took it upon himself to castigate Cripps. It is not so clear why the War Cabinet should have

been so upset by Cripps's negotiations. The official documents of the time do not reveal much on the subject. Technically speaking, Cripps might have gone beyond the terms of the declaration but was within the parameters drawn by his instructions. Besides, his main mission was to arrive at a settlement and on the issue of defence he had almost reached an appropriate agreement, which, in the circumstances, should have been fully supported by the War Cabinet and the Prime Minister. He had also offered to representative Indians 'portfolios of Home and Finance' as pointed out by Linlithgow.[158]

In regard to Stafford Cripps's reference to the 'tyrannical rule of the majority' in his farewell statement, Nehru declared: 'I want to make it perfectly clear that throughout our talks or correspondence, except for the last two letters, there was no reference at all at any stage in the slightest degree to the question of majority rule because much as we disliked, we accepted the idea of a composite cabinet formed from different groups representing different ideologies in the country, some coming among others, from the Muslim League and from the Hindu Mahasabha and Sikhs. We accepted that...'[159] There was a possibility of the formation of a composite Cabinet, which was bound to unnerve the Viceroy, threatening his position and power *vis-à-vis* his Executive Council. Recounting the event further Jawaharlal Nehru observed: 'so the talk of the tyranny of the majority is amazing and fantastic nonsense'. For the defence of India 'I was prepared to agree to many things so as somehow to come to an agreement'.[160]

As a politician and as a member of the British War Cabinet, Stafford Cripps had to defend himself. And 'pulled up' as he had been for exceeding his brief by the Prime Minister, he had to put forward arguments to save his skin and his political career. In the House of Commons, had he expressed his anger or disappointment, making his target the Viceroy or the Prime Minister, he would have had to resign from the Cabinet and would have been in the political wilderness. It was a wonder to many, including Amery, that he had undertaken the difficult task of selling to India what Amery called 'so reactionary and limited a policy' the success of which was regarded as very 'slight' indeed.

Gandhi was quick to grasp at the very first meeting the fallacy of Cripps's position and asked him to return home by the next plane. That was the only meeting Gandhi had with Cripps, on 27 March 1942. Gandhi opposed the idea of partition, as was anticipated, and he opposed the non-accession clauses of the proposals which permitted any number of princely states to secede from the Indian union declaring their independent status and entering into separate treaties with Great Britain, or for that matter with any other sovereign country of the world. Jawaharlal Nehru rightly declared that the proposals offered not one 'partition' but 'several partitions' of India. Stafford Cripps had been categorical in his statement regarding

British treaty obligations with the princely order. At the press conference held by him on 29 March 1942, when he was asked, 'If a province or a state does not want to join, will there be any procedure for settlement?', Cripps answered: 'They will treat another state exactly the same way as they treat with all other powers, Japan, Siam, China, Burma or any other country.'[161] Hence the question of acceptance of the partition proposal did not arise at all as far as the Congress was concerned.

Behind these proposals there seems to have been a hidden agenda, as Amery advised Linlithgow on 24 March 1942 even before the negotiations had actually begun with the Indian leaders: 'After all, supposing that Pakistan does come off, there will be possibly two Muslim areas, the whole of the states, Hindu British India (if that does not divide itself up!) and finally at least one important primitive hill tribe area. It is absolutely absurd to think that each of these is going to have its own air force and navy or even its own mechanised ground forces on any scale that is going to be of use for the defence of India. There will therefore have to be someone, in the absence of a central self-governing federal scheme, to take control of these matters, and that someone will have to have at any rate a certain number of cantonments, aerodromes and ports with probably a central reserve area of its own.' In the circumstances, Amery argued, the British had a good chance of staying on in the Indian soil without 'real Legislature' or other appendages. 'So whatever else you do or agree to', Amery told the Viceroy, 'you had better keep in mind the desirability of retaining Delhi and a considerable area around it as the ultimate federal territory of an eventually united India, and let it not pass into the hand of any one of the "Dominions" that may temporarily emerge out of the first experiment in constitution framing.'[162] Such an idea of keeping an area earmarked for a British presence was no doubt in the realm of speculation at this point of time 'when there are so much more pressing immediate military problems before us', yet it was of great significance indicating that the British withdrawal from India could be uncertain after the end of the war. It was, therefore, quite fortunate for India that the talks failed. The Congress now realized that partition was a possibility and it approached the problem from the standpoint of not allowing more than one partition of India in the future by ensuring that British did not stay longer than necessary on Indian soil.

Another revealing incident must be mentioned. Winston Churchill had taken Cripps to task for utilizing the good offices of Colonel Louis Johnson whom he debunked: he 'was not President Roosevelt's personal representative in any manner outside the specific mission dealing with Indian munitions and kindred topics . . . [and the President] was extremely opposed to anything like US intervention or mediation'.[163] It was natural that the president should deny any idea of intervention in Indian problems, once the objection was raised by the Viceroy and the Prime Minister. Yet,

only on 19 March 1942, President Roosevelt had informed Lord Linlithgow about Colonel Johnson: 'my former Assistant Secretary of War', as a man of 'outstanding ability and high character' who was 'especially qualified to further the mutual interest of Government of India and of the Government of United States'.[164] The president ended by saying: 'I commend him highly to Your Excellency.' In a polite diplomatic manner the president said he had great faith in Johnson, but he meant much more. Cripps also commended Johnson's 'invaluable' assistance during the talks. It is not mere coincidence that on hearing of the failure of the talks, President Roosevelt on 12 April 1942 sent a message to be conveyed 'immediately' to Prime Minster Churchill that 'every effort must be made by us to prevent a break-down'. He went on: 'I hope most earnestly that you may be able to postpone the departure from India of Cripps until one more effort has finally been made to prevent break-down of the negotiations.'[165] He refuted the Prime Minister's claim that the Cripps mission 'proved how great the British desire to reach a settlement' was and that 'the effect in the United States has been wholly beneficial' and told the Prime Minister in no uncertain terms:

> I regret to say that I am unable to agree with the point of view contained in your message to me, that public opinion in the United States believes that negotiations have broken down on general broad issues. Here the general impression is quite the contrary. The feeling is held almost universally that the deadlock has been due to the British Government's unwillingness to concede the right of self-government to the Indians notwithstanding the willingness of the Indians to entrust to the competent British authorities technical military and naval defence control. It is impossible for American public opinion to understand why if there is willingness on the part of the British Government to permit the component parts of India to secede after the war from the British Empire, it is unwilling to permit them to enjoy during the war what is tantamount to self-government.[166]

President Roosevelt tried his best to impress on the British government a need to come to terms with Indians, especially the Congress, on a broader basis. He said: 'I still feel that if the component groups in India could be given now the similar opportunity to set up a National Government in essence similar to our own form of Government under the Articles of Confederation with the understanding that following the termination of a period of trial and error they would be enabled to determine their own form of constitution and to determine, as you have promised them already, their future relationship with the British Empire, probably a solution could be found.'[167] He again appealed to allow Cripps to continue with the

negotiations. Thus, the demand of Indians for a national government with full responsibility was not an outlandish demand, at least in the eyes of the Americans and their president. The Congress demand was for a form of government wherein all components could be accommodated, as stated by Jawaharlal Nehru, and Jinnah had not objected at all to any move of this kind. Had this move been successful there would still have been an opportunity for the two communities to work together not only for the defence of India but also for the future government of the country. The British government had its hidden agenda to nurture. Gandhi knew it better and he therefore said that nothing short of independence would work with the British. He needed to prepare for an eventual showdown with them – the Quit India Movement in August 1942.

Notes

1 Harold Macmillan, *Winds of Change* (London: 1966), preface, pp. 1, 4.
2 Ibid., p. 318.
3 H.V. Hodson, *Twentieth-Century Empire* (London: 1948), pp. 71, 85.
4 *The Leo Amery Diaries*, pp. 21, 85.
5 Gandhi's meeting with Viceroy, 5 February 1940; V. to SOS, 6 February 1940, tel. 43; interview with Jinnah, 13 January 1940; Linlithgow to Zetland, 16 January 1940 and 6 February 1940; V. to SOS, 6 February 1940, tel. 47. Linlithgow Papers, Mss. Eur. F. 125/9 and Mss. Eur. F. 125/19.
6 Gowher Rizvi, *Linlithgow and India*, pp. 166–7.
7 Ibid., p. 164.
8 Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (Calcutta: 1946), p. 426.
9 Gowher Rizvi, *Linlithgow and India*, p. 165.
10 Ibid., p. 166.
11 Ibid., pp. 162–3.
12 Ibid., p. 166.
13 Attlee to Amery, 24 January 1942, *Transfer of Power* I, no. 35, p. 75. Attlee's letter referred to the letter of Linlithgow to Amery, 21 January 1942, no. 23, pp. 45–50, to which Attlee took strong exception.
14 Linlithgow to Amery, 23 January 1942, *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 30, p. 57.
15 Ibid., p. 58.
16 Ibid., para 15.
17 Ibid., para 24, p. 60.
18 *The Leo Amery Diaries*, 2 January 1942, p. 728.
19 Linlithgow to Amery 23–27 January 1942, para 33, *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 30, p. 62.
20 Ibid., para 34.
21 Churchill's instructions to Linlithgow, 3 February 1942, *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 63, p. 114.
22 Lumley to Linlithgow, 15 January 1942, *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 13, pp. 25–6.
23 Ibid., p. 29.
24 Linlithgow to Amery, 21 January 1942, para 4, *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 23, p. 45.
25 Ibid., paras 2–3.

26 Ibid., *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 23, pp. 45–50.
27 Ibid., para 14, pp. 48–9.
28 Ibid., para 14, p. 48.
29 Ibid., para 13, p. 48.
30 Ibid.
31 Attlee to Amery, 24 January 1942, *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 35, p. 75.
32 Amery to Attlee, 26 January 1942, *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 38, pp. 77–8, the quote is on p. 78.
33 Attlee's 'Memorandum on Indian Political Situation', 2 February 1942, placed before War Cabinet W.M. (42); *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 60, pp. 110–13, the quote is on p. 111, para 10.
34 Ibid.
35 Ibid., para 8, p. 111.
36 Ibid., paras 11, 12, pp. 111–12.
37 Ibid., para 14, p. 112.
38 Ibid., para 16, p. 116.
39 Minute of David Monteath, 4 February 1942, *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 64, p. 115.
40 Ibid.
41 Amery to Linlithgow, 9 February 1942, *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 89, p. 138.
42 *Transfer of Power*, I, 76, p. 124. Lord Wavell was commander-in-chief (C-in-C) of India then.
43 War Cabinet W.M. (42), minutes 1–3, 5 February 1942, *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 66, pp. 117–19.
44 Note by Amery, *Transfer of Power*, I, nos 77 and 78, pp. 124–7. Discussion with Simon & Monteath 9 February 1942, encl. to 90, pp. 140–1.
45 Note by Amery, 7 February 1942, *Transfer of Power*, I, nos 77–78, pp. 124–7.
46 Attlee to Amery, 10 February 1942, *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 91, pp. 141–2.
47 *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 96, pp. 145–6.
48 Linlithgow to Amery, 13 February 1942, para 4, ibid., no. 121, pp. 165–8, emphasis added.
49 Minute of Monteath and Amery, 16 February 1942, ibid., no. 123, p. 169.
50 Linlithgow to Amery, 16 February 1942, para 8, ibid., p. 179.
51 Churchill to Linlithgow, 13 February 1942, ibid., no. 113, p. 161.
52 Amery to Churchill, Secretary of State's minute, 15 February 1942, ibid., no. 127, p. 175, also see pp. 175–6.
53 Amery to Linlithgow, 17 February 1942, *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 145, p. 197.
54 Linlithgow to Amery, 21 February 1942, *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 160, p. 215.
55 Amery to Linlithgow, 2 March 1942, paras 1 and 2, *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 218, p. 295.
56 *The Leo Amery Diaries*, pp. 785, 786, 787.
57 Ibid., p. 859.
58 *Transfer of Power*, I, Churchill to Linlithgow, 10 March 1942, no. 294, p. 394; Amery to Churchill, 12 March 1942, no. 312, p. 411.
59 Linlithgow to Amery, 11 March 1942, ibid., no. 305, p. 405.
60 Linlithgow to Amery, 10 March 1942, ibid., no. 305, p. 405.
61 Amery to Linlithgow, 10 March 1942, ibid., no. 304, pp. 401–4.
62 Ibid., para 3, p. 403.
63 Linlithgow to Amery, 10 March 1942, ibid., no. 293, p. 392.
64 Ibid.
65 Quoted in Moore, *Cripps, Churchill and India*, p. 82.
66 Churchill to Linlithgow, 10 March 1942, *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 294, p. 395.
67 Amery to Linlithgow, 10 March 1942, ibid., no. 304, para 7, p. 404.

68 War Cabinet W.M. (42), meeting of 7 March 1942, *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 263, p. 353; also no. 252, p. 335.
69 Ibid., no. 254, p. 343.
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid., no. 258, pp. 349–50.
72 Mackenzie King to Churchill, 6 March 1942, ibid., no. 259, p. 350.
73 Churchill to Roosevelt, 4 March 1942, ibid., no. 228, pp. 310–12.
74 G.S. Bajpai to Linlithgow, 11 March 1942, *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 318, p. 415.
75 Amery to Linlithgow, 10 March 1942, ibid., no. 304, p. 404.
76 Draft declaration was drafted by Clement Attlee. The War Cabinet considered it on 4 March 1942. This formed the basis of Cripps's mission to India, *Transfer of Power,* I, no. 215, pp. 291–3; no. 229, pp. 314–15; the declaration is on pp. 291–3.
77 Instructions for Stafford Cripps, 9 March 1942, transmitted to him through Viceroy, 28 March 1942, ibid., no. 283, pp. 379–8, annex to no. 283, p. 380.
78 Cripps's notes of interview with Jinnah, 25 March 1942, ibid., no. 380, p. 480.
79 Note by Pinnell, Private Secretary to Viceroy (PSV), of conversation between Cripps and Linlithgow, 31 March 1942, ibid., no. 459, p. 570.
80 Cripps's notes, ibid., no. 413, p. 512.
81 Ibid., no. 412, p. 511.
82 Ibid., no. 464, p. 580.
83 Ibid., no. 463, p. 531.
84 Ibid., no. 465, p. 581.
85 Ibid., no. 396, pp. 496–8.
86 Ibid., p. 497.
87 Interview with Louis Fischer, *CWMG*, no. 76, app. V, pp. 427–51; Gandhi's interview with Cripps, 27 March 1942, *Transfer of Power*, I, pp. 498–500.
88 *CWMG*, no. 76, pp. 28–9.
89 Ibid., p. 427.
90 Ibid., p. 429.
91 Ibid., p. 427.
92 Ibid., p. 434.
93 Linlithgow to Amery, 24 March 1942, informing him of Jinnah's speech on the 'Pakistan Day' public meeting at Delhi on 23 March, *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 374, pp. 467–8, see p. 468.
94 *CWMG*, no. 76, p. 434.
95 Ibid., pp. 434–5.
96 Ibid., pp. 429–30.
97 Ibid., p. 431.
98 Ibid.
99 Ibid., p. 432.
100 Stanley Wolpert, *Jinnah of Pakistan*, p. 199.
101 *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 597, p. 739.
102 Ibid., no. 604, p. 744.
103 Note by Pinnell, PSV, of conversation between Linlithgow and Cripps, 9 April 1942, ibid., no. 571, p. 711.
104 Moore, *Churchill, Cripps and India*, p. 82.
105 Linlithgow to Amery, 31 March 1942, *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 474, p. 592.
106 Moore, *Churchill, Cripps and India*, p. 82.
107 Ibid.
108 *The Leo Amery Diaries*, p. 729.
109 Nehru *The Discovery of India*, p. 404.

110 Jinnah's interview with Cripps, 25 March 1942, *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 380, p. 480.
111 Cripps's press conference, 29 March 1942, *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 440, pp. 537–51, see p. 547.
112 Ibid., emphasis added.
113 Ibid., pp. 547–8.
114 Ibid., no. 460, p. 578.
115 Ibid., no. 530, para 5, p. 654.
116 Ibid., no. 538, p. 663.
117 Ibid., no. 519, para 18, p. 638.
118 *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 525, pp. 642–3, see p. 643.
119 Note by Pinnell, 6 April 1942, ibid., no. 539, p. 664.
120 *The Indian Annual Register*, January–June 1942, I, p. 241.
121 Record of interview with Colonel Johnson and Olaf Caroe, 6 April 1942, *Transfer of Power*, I, encl. to no. 540, p. 166, para 4.
122 Cripps to Churchill (via Viceroy and India Office), 29 March 1942, ibid., no. 430, pp. 525–6.
123 Amery to Linlithgow, 3 April 1942, para 2, ibid., no. 517, p. 632.
124 Linlithgow to Churchill, 6 April 1942, *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 530, pp. 653–4, paras 1 and 2, emphasis added.
125 Cripps to Maulana Azad, 7 April 1942, ibid., no. 543, pp. 683–4.
126 Record of interview between Nehru, Colonel Johnson and Olaf Caroe, 6 April 1942, encl. to no. 540, para 5, p. 664.
127 Note by Linlithgow of conversation with Cripps, 8 April 1942, *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 553, pp. 694–6, see p. 694.
128 Ibid., p. 696.
129 Ibid., pp. 694–5.
130 Ibid., p. 695.
131 *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 557, pp. 697–8; Minute of Monteath, Ibid., no. 560, pp. 700–1.
132 *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 563, p. 703; also no. 564, p. 704.
133 Ibid., no. 567, paras 1, 4, pp. 707–8.
134 Ibid., no. 564, p. 704.
135 Ibid., no. 577, pp. 715–17.
136 Ibid., no. 574, p. 714.
137 Ibid., no. 380, pp. 480, 730. Maulana Azad on 10 April 1942 stated that it was the unanimous demand of the Indian people, no. 587, p. 730.
138 Ibid., no. 626, p. 774.
139 Ibid., no. 588, pp. 730–1.
140 Ibid., no. 517, p. 634. Linlithgow's remarks on the margin with initials L.
141 *The Discovery of India*, pp. 383–4.
142 *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 525, p. 663.
143 Ibid., no. 6, p. 14.
144 Note by Major General Lockhart, 25 February 1942 for circulation to War Cabinet Committee on India. Total of 418,000 in Indian army of which Hindus were 263,000 (52 per cent), Muslims 155,000 (37 per cent), Sikhs 57,000 (8 per cent). It was wrong for the Viceroy to have stated earlier that Hindus formed only 41 per cent of the Indian army. Ibid., no. 180, pp. 238–9.
145 Ibid., no. 580, pp. 719–20.
146 Ibid., p. 720.
147 Ibid., no. 581, pp. 720–1.
148 Ibid., no. 582, para 1, p. 721.

149 Ibid., para 2, p. 722.
150 Ibid., paras 3 and 4, p. 722.
151 Ibid., no. 588, pp. 730–1.
152 *The Indian Annual Register*, January–June 1942, I, p. 235.
153 *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 282, p. 378.
154 *Transfer of Power*, I, Annex. to no. 283, p. 380.
155 *Transfer of Power,* I, no. 424, p. 519.
156 Ibid., no. 308, p. 407.
157 Ibid., no. 294, p. 395.
158 Linlithgow to Amery, 12 April 1942, ibid., no. 613, p. 761.
159 *The Indian Annual Register*, January–June 1942, I, p. 241.
160 Ibid.
161 Cripps's press conference, *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 440, p. 542.
162 Amery to Linlithgow, 24 March 1942, ibid., no. 375, p. 469, para 2.
163 Ibid.
164 *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 350, p. 445.
165 Roosevelt to Churchill, 12 April 1942, *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 611, p. 759.
166 Ibid.
167 Ibid., pp. 759–60.

6

QUIT INDIA AND THE AFTERMATH

The Quit India Movement

The Quit India Movement swept across the country as a mighty tidal wave in 1942. It was a powerful, multidimensional and all-embracing movement arising from the urge to be free and the spirit of nationalism. Nationalism is essentially an emotive concept and a doctrine of struggle. The Quit India Movement symbolized the penultimate phase of the anti-imperialist struggle in India.

The Quit India call given on 8 August 1942 by the Indian National Congress was not mere rhetoric: it posed a real threat to British rule, and the government responded by unleashing a reign of terror, leaving the country devastated and ravaged. The mass upheaval was suppressed by the superior forces of the British power; nevertheless, the British did quit India sooner than expected in 1947.

With the arrival of Gandhi on the political scene as the unquestioned leader of the largest political organization of India, the Indian National Congress, an adversarial relationship developed between the British government and the Indian National Congress. The Linlithgow government epitomized the grandeur and authenticity of British power, displaying disdain for the leaders of 'the conquered land';[1] the more enlightened and farsighted British statesman Clement Attlee had taken exception to this attitude.[2] The Indian National Congress, with as much nationalistic fervour and patriotic zeal, was contemptuous of the British ruling classes and rejected all offers of reforms coming as they did in trickles. The notion of the subject race and the vanquished people asking for anything comparable to the British concepts of liberty, equality and justice was anathema to the British ruling class represented by tory Viceroy Lord Linlithgow. One of his advisers, the home member Reginald Maxwell, called Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru 'worse criminals' than the Germans and Italians as it seemed, to Maxwell, 'they were enemies of society who wanted to subvert the existing order'.[3]

The hostility generated by the adversarial roles was displayed in many ways: it was essentially an offshoot of the clash between imperialism and

nationalism represented by the British and the Indian National Congress respectively. The clash appeared to be between the ideology of freedom versus slavery; between justice versus injustice; between equality versus inequality; between humanity versus racialism. The frustration caused by the abrupt ending of the Cripps negotiations, especially when the agreement seemed so near at hand on 'the defence formula', led to a deep sense of betrayal and resentment among the Congressmen and the Indian people in general. It demonstrated that the British government's desire for talks was merely 'to gain time' and to impress upon its allies of its resolve to break the deadlock, as Winston Churchill observed both in the War Cabinet meetings as well as to Stafford Cripps on 11 April 1942.[4] But no one in India could mistake the political gamesmanship displayed at such a critical juncture. The Indians felt deceived and expressed their dismay and resentment at being treated as 'chattels to be disposed of by foreign authority' as the resolution of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) observed at its meeting on 1 May 1942. The resolution expressed the resentment in the following words:

> The proposals of the British government and their subsequent elucidation by Sir Stafford Cripps have led to great bitterness and distrust of that government and the spirit of non-cooperation with Britain has grown. They have demonstrated that even in this hour of danger, not only to India but to the cause of the United Nations, the British government functions as an imperialist government and refuses to recognize the independence of India or to part with any real power.
>
> India's participation in the war was a purely British act imposed upon the Indian people without the consent of their representatives. While India has no quarrel with the people of any country, she has repeatedly declared her antipathy to Nazism and Fascism as to Imperialism. If India were free she would have determined her own policy and might have kept out of the war, though her sympathies would, in any event, have been with the victims of aggression. If, however, circumstances had led her to join the war, she would have done so as a free country fighting for freedom, and her defence would have been organized on a popular basis with a national army under national control and leadership, and with intimate contacts with the people.
>
> The All-India Congress Committee is convinced that India will attain her freedom through her own strength and will retain it likewise. The present crisis, as well as the experience of the negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps, makes it impossible for the Congress to consider any schemes or proposals which retain, even in a partial measure, British control and authority in India. Not

> only the interests of India but also Britain's safety, and world peace and freedom demand that Britain must abandon her hold on India. It is on the basis of independence alone that India can deal with Britain or other nations.[5]

The Allied powers had suffered severe reverses in the war in south-east Asia. The Japanese had captured Penang and Singapore; they had advanced to Malaya; and had threatened Burma. There was an exodus of thousands of Indians from these areas. The British and Europeans retreated through the Arakan Hills and other dense forests of the north-eastern regions. One of the two roads, the better one, was reserved for the British and Europeans, and Indians were not allowed to traverse through it; a display of racial discrimination in spite of the Indian soldiers' participation in the war. Rangoon fell on 8 March 1942. The Andamans and Nicobar Islands were occupied by the Japanese and the ports of Calcutta, Madras and Vizagapatnam became the target of Japanese bombing. Nearly 200,000 people were evacuated from the coastal areas, and the ports of Madras and Vizagapatnam were closed. The war expenses had risen many times, and were to be borne by the Indian taxpayers. The defence budget of India had increased from US$14.8 million in 1939 to nearly US$40 million in 1942. Acute shortages of all essential commodities plagued the country and people suffered a great deal.

During the summer months of 1942 the Indian National Congress began country-wide discussions about the future course of action. On 1 May 1942, the AICC resolved to prepare itself to defend India against Japanese attack and demanded full freedom for India. The Congress working committee meeting held in Wardha on 14 July 1942 reiterated the demands and decided to meet in Bombay on 7–8 August 1942. It was at the Bombay meeting of the AICC that the Quit India resolution was passed.

The AICC met in Bombay on 7–8 August to review the political situation in India and to adopt a course of action for the liberation of India. After prolonged discussions on 7 August the committee reassembled at the Gowalia Tank Maidan on 8 August at 3 pm. Nearly 250 members of the AICC and 10,000 visitors attended this historic meeting, wherein the Quit India resolution was passed amid wild enthusiasm and tumultuous cheers. The resolution had been drafted earlier by Jawaharlal Nehru, who moved the resolution; Sardar Patel seconded it. Only 13 members of the AICC voted against it.

The Quit India resolution[6] was a great document comparable to the fundamental rights resolution of the Karachi Congress 1931, the independence resolution passed at the Lahore Congress presided over by Jawaharlal Nehru on 31 December 1929, and the pledge of independence taken way back on 30 January 1930. It reiterated the nation's resolve to

fight for the legitimate and inalienable right to independence. It examined the circumstances leading to the unilateral decision taken by the British government declaring that India was a party to the Second World War; this declaration was made without reference to popular Congress ministries, which had ruled over most of the British Indian provinces, after winning the elections, as provided by the Government of India Act 1935.

How could India participate in the war as a slave nation? If the war was being fought for freedom and democracy, as declared by the Allied powers, was it not its foremost duty to recognize freedom and democracy for India? India could only resist aggression if it was reinforced by the driving power, freedom. 'Only the glow of freedom now can release that energy and enthusiasm of millions of people which will immediately transform the nature of the war', the resolution of 8 August affirmed. The resolution demanded, first, 'the withdrawal of British power from India'; and, second, the institution of a provisional national government with full powers to Indian representatives forming the government. It promised cooperation in the war effort, only after independence was granted to India and not otherwise: 'A free India will assure this success by throwing all her great resources in the struggle for freedom against the aggression of Nazism, Fascism and Imperialism.'[7] Gandhi made a passionate plea for mass action for the achievement of these goals.

Addressing the gathering in the open session Gandhi declared that nothing short of complete freedom will satisfy Indians. He asked every Indian 'from this moment onwards to consider yourself a free man or woman, and act as if you are free and are no longer under the heel of this imperialism'. Furthermore, he exhorted them to remember the mantra, which he gave to the people. 'The mantra is', he said, 'Do or Die. We shall either free India or die in the attempt. We shall not live to see the perpetuation of our slavery.' He further observed: 'Take the pledge with God and your own conscience as witness that you will no longer rest until freedom is achieved and will be prepared to lay down your lives in the attempt to achieve it.'[8]

Before giving a chance to the Indian National Congress to draw up a strategy and detailed plan for the movement, the government, in a sudden and swift action, arrested most of the leaders of the Indian National Congress in a pre-dawn swoop on 9 August 1942.

The mass upheaval

The unprecedented mass upheaval, which engulfed the country after the arrest of Gandhi and other prominent leaders of the Congress on 9 August 1942, took everyone by surprise. On the night of 8 August 1942, after the Quit India resolution was passed, the workers of the Congress, who had

attended the Bombay meeting, left for their respective destinations in anticipation of a programme to be announced shortly by the Congress and Gandhi. The action taken by the government immobilized the Congress leadership. This electrified the political atmosphere in the country resulting in a mass upsurge throughout the months of August and September. To begin with, peaceful processions, *hartals* and demonstrations were undertaken in which all and sundry joined; inevitably these ended up in violence and conflict when challenged by police. The extraordinary speed with which the movement spread to small towns and villages from the metropolitan centres was truly amazing. It effectively demonstrated the intensity of the feelings of the people against the government and its measures taken against their leaders.

The Congress indeed had not anticipated such action from the government. In fact, Gandhi had contemplated launching a mass struggle only after a lapse of a week or two. In his interview with the Associated Press in Bombay on 6 August, he had observed: 'I have definitely contemplated an interval between the passing of the Congress Resolution and the starting of the struggle. I do not know if what I contemplate doing according to my wont can be in any way described as being in the nature of negotiation but a letter will certainly go to the Viceroy, not as an ultimatum but as an earnest pleading for avoidance of a conflict. If there is a favourable response, then my letter can be the basis for negotiation.'[9] Three weeks earlier, on 15 July 1942, he had expressed himself in similar vein while being interviewed by the press at Wardha. He had observed: 'Assuming that the AICC confirms the resolution there will be some time – but not very long – taken. As far as I can see just now it may be a week or two; as I have always done before launching at every struggle.'[10] In his speech on 8 August 1942, he had pointed out that he would announce the plan in two or three weeks. While the Congress had been debating for months whether to launch a mass struggle, which Gandhi had said would be 'my biggest movement', there is no evidence to show that any detailed plan was prepared to direct such a movement. On 4 August 1942, Gandhi had drafted instructions for civil resisters, which were to be placed before the Congress working committee for approval. The instructions for civil resisters were not issued because the working committee had not met to consider them. On 28 June 1945, Gandhi wrote as a postscript to the draft: 'These would have been issued if they had been passed by the Working Committee. Now they are a part of historical record only.'[11]

Thus, it is clear that no plan of action had been prepared and no instructions issued for compliance by the Indian National Congress. However, Jawaharlal Nehru, as the President of the UP Provincial Congress Committee (PCC), had issued some notes on 24 July 1942: though of a general nature, they were meant to provide specific guidelines

to the Congress leaders and workers of UP at the grass-roots level. A summary of these notes gives an insight into the line of thinking of the Congress leaders:[12]

1. The movement will be 'something relatively short but very intense'. Intense movement cannot be carried on at the same high pitch for very long. Hence, the first two or three months will be most important after launching the movement.
2. The government action also will be 'far more intense and brutal than in the past'.
3. 'Everything that we have known in 1930–1932 will be repeated and much more.'
4. Jail going has been too common. While workers may be put behind bars, it is not the intention of Gandhi to fill the jails. This indicates that the conflict will be more severe.
5. Gandhi has made it clear that 'he contemplates non-payment of taxes, *hartals* and strikes (resignation from government service), salt manufacture, refusal to obey government orders, etc. etc.'.
6. Fines should not be paid and assistance of any kind to police should not be given.
7. Since the government will enforce censorship of the press resulting in suppression of news and information, everybody should read *Harijan* to acquire information and news of the movement.
8. Await instructions from the AICC. But, remember, each local centre must take care of its own duties and functions.
9. In respect of instructions relating to organizational matters:

   (a) The local Congress committees are advised to plan their action keeping in view local requirements.
   (b) In a district, there should be several centres of activity.
   (c) Each *tehsil* should have a centre.
   (d) Each centre should be self-sufficient and it should not be dependent on other centres or areas.
   (e) Congress offices and committees should forthwith make their own internal arrangements for carrying out the programme of the Congress. A *sanchalak* (director) will be responsible for each office of the Congress and committee. Where there are separate city and district *sanchalaks*, they should confer together to evolve a joint plan of action.
   (f) All local disputes must be ended forthwith.
   (g) On 1 August 1942, meetings will be held throughout UP, but it is not a part of the *satyagraha* movement. The main purpose is 'to awaken the popular mind of the critical position' through which the country is passing. Public speeches and processions should be avoided.

(h) Await instructions from the president, UP PCC and the AICC.
(i) 'But always it must be remembered that non-violence has to be the basic feature of all activities.'

The set of notes issued by Jawaharlal Nehru to the Congress workers and provincial leaders indicates that a qualitative change in the mass upsurge was expected during the Quit India Movement. It is clear that measures adopted during the Civil Disobedience Movement were to be reinforced more vigorously, including breaking of salt laws and non-payment of land revenue demands and other taxes. However, it was not stated what more severe action was envisaged by the Congress. Apparently, the Congress would have planned a complete breakdown of administration, by urging the entire Indian population to embark on the path of complete civil disobedience irrespective of consequences. The tone of the notes reflected an element of warlike urgency and the speeches delivered by Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru and other leaders on 8 August 1942 suggested an extreme form of political action within the framework of a non-violent mass upsurge. It could be conjectured that a call for an 'open rebellion' would have been given by the Congress, if it had been allowed more time to plan.

Gandhi had asked the people to declare themselves free and each man and woman was to act as a free man and woman. On 8 August 1942, while addressing the gathering, Gandhi had assured the people: 'you may take it from me that I am not going to strike a bargain with the Viceroy for ministries and the like. I am not going to be satisfied with anything short of complete freedom... I will say nothing short of freedom.'[13] Thus, when Gandhi flashed his final message ending with the words, 'We will do or die', before departing for jail on the morning of 9 August 1942, it is reasonable to assume that the Congress workers and junior leaders at the district, *tehsil*, village and town levels might have misunderstood the implication of the message. When the entire leadership was removed from the political scene in one blow, it was almost inevitable that the movement under the leadership of the youth leaders at the grass-roots level would lead to violence of some kind or the other. There is no doubt that the movement remained scattered and unorganized owing to a lack of central control and direction. Every junior leader of the Congress, including student leaders, whose role during the movement was extremely important, acted according to his own understanding and interpretation of Gandhi's message and the instructions circulated by the Congress leaders.

The Congress organization in UP was very strong. On 9 August 1942, 550 members of the UP Congress were arrested. The storm centres in UP were the districts of Ballia, Ghazipur, Azamgarh, Jaunpur and Banaras. The movement was extremely intense and widespread in other districts also, including the important towns like Agra, Mathura, Lucknow and

Allahabad. In Ballia, a national government was formed which was in complete control of the affairs of Ballia until 22 August 1942. Later, a reign of terror was unleashed and the movement suppressed.[14]

Most of the villages were under Congress *panchayats* (village councils), which functioned independently, without any control during the 1942 upsurge. In Basti, a 65,000-strong procession was organized which proceeded to hoist the national flag on the *thana*: a number of persons were killed after firing took place. Similarly, at the Tarua police station 78,000 persons had assembled to hoist the Congress flag on 14 August. Such spontaneous gatherings of unarmed peasants were a unique feature of the movement particularly during the first week after the call to Quit India was given on 8 August 1942. Later, the movement went out of control resulting in considerable destruction of life and property.

The role of the peasantry in the mass struggle of 1942 was most spectacular. In UP and Bihar, virtually every village had a *panchayat* of its own, controlled by political activists, owing allegiance to the Congress, or other groups. They engaged in peaceful marches as well as militant acts, such as the capture of post offices, police posts, etc. In Bihar, nearly 1,000 police stations were captured, some of which were set on fire. They also launched attacks on jails. A 10,000-strong mob entered the jail at Sitamarhi and released some of the political prisoners. From the Ara and Ghonda jails, 700 and 100 prisoners were released respectively. Nearly 1,000 prisoners escaped from the Hajipur jail, when a 2,000-strong village mob attacked it. So insecure was the position of police stations in Bihar in 1942 that 80 per cent of them were moved out of villages and *tehsils* and placed directly under the charge of district headquarters. The people of the districts of Champaran, Gaya, Shahabad, Bhagalpur, Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga and Patna displayed considerable political consciousness by participating in the movement. In Darbhanga alone, at one stage, 19,000 arrests were made and in Hazaribagh more than 13,000 people were arrested. More than 10,000 soldiers were stationed at Patna to contain the mass upheaval.

In Bengal, the cities of Calcutta and Dhaka, and towns and divisional headquarters came up with their own methods of organizing the movement. In the subdivision of Tamluk, most of the associations were declared illegal. In addition to the Congress committees and the Congress volunteer organizations, the Gram Dal, the Vidyut Vahini and Tamralipta Jatiya Sarkar were declared illegal. In Sutahata, a procession consisting of about 40,000 people marched to the police station, damaged it and in return suffered from police firing. Nandigram also witnessed a march of 10,000 to the police post, with similar results. In the entire region, women supported the activists with great devotion and bravery. A reign of terror was unleashed in these areas and in Midnapore. In Contai a national government was formed, consisting of a president assisted by a council of ministers holding the portfolios of defence, revenue, justice, etc., which functioned

effectively until the police and army brutalities subdued it. A voluntary corps was set up to defend the national government. Afterwards, in the wake of repression unleashed by the government, 12,600 people were arrested, 965 houses burnt and 228 women violated. In most villages in the Dinajpur, Howrah and Mymensingh districts which participated in the movement, such horrors were committed.

Assam did not lag behind in political organization and activity. The area was particularly susceptible at this juncture; thousands of Indians were entering it after fleeing Burma. The whole area was charged with nationalistic fervour and, when the Assam Congress leaders were arrested, the local people organized themselves and formed a national government, even in the remote villages. The village *panchayats* were given the power to form *swadhin rashtra* (independent government) – to carry out the functions of a self-sufficient government. Nowgong was the nerve centre of such activities followed by Behrampur, Sibsagar, Darang, Kamrup, Golpara and Silhet.

The participation of Muslims, in spite of the call for Pakistan given by the Muslim League, was prominent in the eastern districts of UP, Bihar in general and in Purnea district in particular. Muslims joined in great numbers in Chittagong and Silehar districts. In the coastal districts of Bengal, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Madras, the movement grew in strength as the threat of Japanese attack by sea and air became real. The districts of Puri, Balasore, East Godavari and Guntur were already prominent centres of political activity. As the war crisis developed, the people swung into action. More than 1 million people had already been evacuated and the power and prestige of British rule was at a low ebb in these areas and the political activists took advantage of the situation.

The involvement of the youth and students in the movement was a striking feature, particularly in Bombay, UP and Bihar. In the Banaras division of UP, it was reported that 30,000 students were expelled from schools and colleges, and almost all schools and colleges were closed for months on end. Similarly, universities and colleges in other parts of the country remained closed for months.

The workers caused a flutter by going on strike for days and months in response to the call of the Congress. Nearly 30,000 workers of the Tata Iron & Steel Co. at Jamshedpur and the workers at Dalmianagar struck work for 13 days. They were treated sympathetically by the management and they returned to work after an assurance was given that the management would appeal to the government to favourably consider Congress demands. The same story was repeated in Ahmedabad, where the mill-workers struck work for nearly four months. The textile workers of Ahmednagar and Pune struck for a few weeks. The mill owners did not deduct wages for the period of strike. The sympathy shown by the industrialists came in for sharp criticism by the government. In fact, many of them were in sympathy

with the main demand of the Congress, though they might have had reservations about the methods adopted. The cotton and textile mills of Delhi remained closed for 29 days. In Bengal, the Howrah jute mills and other industrial establishments like Turner, Morrison & Co. remained completely paralysed. Also, the IGN and the railway company's dockyard at Calcutta, remained closed for several weeks. The Buckingham and Carnatic mills in Madras, which produced khakhi drill for the army, remained closed on account of the strike of its workers, losing about 25 million yards of cloth in the process. Similarly, workers of the Birla jute mills and the Hindustan Aircraft Manufacturing Co., Bangalore, struck for varying periods of time. In the mills of Baroda, Indore and Nagpur, production fell owing to strikes of workers and the total loss was estimated at about Rs 25 million. Similarly, the Imperial Tobacco Co., with its factories in Calcutta, Bombay, Bangalore and Saharanpur, was affected. Those factories and mills which were under European management suffered most.

The Bombay presidency covered a large area consisting of 26 British districts and 19 Indian states. Bombay city itself was the storm centre of the Indian nationalist movement and the Quit India resolution was passed there. It was natural, therefore, that Bombay city would take a leading part in the movement. Demonstrations and processions were held on 9 August 1942 and a meeting was organized at Shivaji Park. The police intervened and fired on the demonstrators, killing eight and wounding 169. During the movement more than 5,000 people were arrested; 500 were convicted and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment extending from six weeks to five years.

Bombay also witnessed underground activity. Most of the railway tracks in and around Bombay were tampered with and an underground radio was established by Congress socialists, led by Ram Manohar Lohia, which was finally discovered in November 1942, resulting in the arrest of several people, who were later sentenced to four to five years' imprisonment. In the course of this operation, several thousand Congress bulletins were seized. In the Satara, Dharwad and Karnataka regions of the Bombay presidency, intense political activity was displayed. There were 1,600 cases of the cutting of telegraph lines; 26 railway stations were damaged; and 11 trains were derailed. The records of at least 220 villages were burnt and 257 village offices were captured. The number of people arrested was more than 7,000 and more than Rs 3,36,000 were collected as fines.

In Satara region, for months, a parallel government called Prati Sarkar was established under the leadership of Nana Patil, and other political activists. They established *panchayat* courts for dispensing justice and arranged for the maintenance of law and order through their own police establishments. In the region, none of the villages went to the British courts to seek justice.

In Gujarat, most of the municipal boards which were under Congress influence supported the movement and, in spite of the firing which took place at several places, the people of the districts of Khera, Ahmedabad and Panchmahal showed exemplary restraint and non-violence. In Surat district 1,281 people were arrested. The textile mills were closed for three and half months; markets for two months; and all educational institutions remained closed for a year.

Similar activities of varying intensity were reported from Kerala, Madras and Andhra Pradesh: railway stations were burnt, trains derailed, salt manufactured, strikes and *hartals* organized, resulting in widespread dislocation of administrative machinery. Most of the villages in the region comprising Andhra Pradesh were involved in the movement.

In the Central Provinces, 5,060 persons were convicted and punished. Firing took place at 70 places, as a result of which 345 people were killed. More than Rs 200,000 were collected as fines. Assaults on women was perpetrated and the cases of Ashti and Chimur rocked the entire country when the harrowing details were known to the people. The fast of Professor Bhansali prompted the government to institute an inquiry. In the districts of Nagpur, Bhandara, Gonda, Wardha, Raipur and Mahakoshal region, the movement was very strong.

The movement was not confined to the British Indian provinces; it spread to the territories of the ruling chiefs. It was slowly gaining in strength after the Praja Mandals (Princely State People's Congress) had been formed in many of the princely states in Rajasthan, Orissa, Maharashtra and Mysore. In Mysore, one of the largest princely states of India, considerable political activity was witnessed and nearly 2,500 people were arrested during the course of the movement. In other princely states, the movement for democratic governmental reforms was launched by the Praja Mandals.

The press, the nationalist press in particular, came in for sharp attack on its freedom from the government: censorship was imposed. There was little news of the movement in the English dailies, most of which were managed and run by foreign agencies. Some of the nationalist dailies ceased publication as a protest and refused to publish even after the relaxation on publication of news was introduced.

Among the newspapers which stopped publication in response to Gandhi's advice, as a mark of protest against the government's repressive measures, were the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, Calcutta; it reappeared only on 31 August 1942. Other papers which suspended their publication for varying periods were *Advance* (Calcutta), *Hindustan Standard* (Calcutta), the *Hindustan Times* (New Delhi), the *Indian Express* (Madras) and the *National Herald* (Lucknow). Among the Indian-language papers, nine in Bengali, 20 in Hindi, four in Gujarati, six in Tamil, nine in Telugu, eight in Marathi, two in Sindhi, one in Urdu, one in Oriya, two in Assamese, two in Malayalam and three in

Kannada ceased publication during this period. The Bihar government also banned *The Searchlight*. Three Bengali newspapers were banned by the Bengal government and two Marathi newspapers were banned by the Bombay government until the end of the war.

The role of women in the movement was extremely significant. In fact, in many places they led the movement, and came forward to hoist the national flag on government buildings; some of them were killed, as was the case in Assam. More importantly, they gave full support to men in villages during the underground activity, as well in picketing, salt manufacture and such like.

The underground activity created a considerable stir, providing a sense of mystery during the 1942 movement. A detailed account has been provided by A.C. Bhuyan.[15] Most of these activities were confined to Bihar, parts of Uttar Pradesh and Bombay. Sabotage and guerilla action were prominent features. Underground resistance camps were established and it has been claimed that nearly 4,000 people were involved in such an activity.

The movement turned out to be 'essentially a spontaneous mass upheaval', as Jawaharlal Nehru put it. He wrote: 'The sudden and unorganized demonstrations and outbreaks on the part of the people, culminating in violent conflicts and destruction, and continued against overwhelming and powerful armed forces, were a measure of the intensity of their feelings . . . There were no directions, no programme. There was no well-known person to lead them or tell them what to do, and yet they were too excited and angry to remain quiescent.'[16]

The government showed great ferocity in dealing with the revolt, employing brutal force to suppress it. Village after village was burnt down under official supervision. According to an official estimate, 1,028 were killed and 3,200 were wounded by police or military firing during the 1942 disturbances. The police and military resorted to firing on at least 538 occasions and violent mobs were fired upon or bombed from aeroplanes. The unofficial figure of the dead, however, was about 25,000. Jawaharlal Nehru observed in *The Discovery of India* that about 10,000 persons were killed in 1942. More than Rs 9 million were collected as fines from villages. By the end of 1942, more than 100,000 persons were thrown into the jails without trial; most of them were released only after the war came to an end.[17]

The aftermath

Public opinion the world over remained by and large hostile to the Quit India Movement. It was, therefore, no surprise that India lost British sympathy at this juncture. Even the Labour Party which had all along supported India's demand for freedom and self-government turned its

face against it. The *Manchester Guardian* could hardly have countenanced such a movement at a time when the Japanese were mauling Allied naval and air power making startling inroads into India's defence. The *New Statesman* of Kingsley Martin and the Liberal and Labour papers, the *News Chronicle* and *Daily Herald*, were decidedly opposed to Gandhi's Quit India call. The tories, including Winston Churchill, ever antagonistic to the Indian National Congress, were wild with rage. The relations between them were further exacerbated, the tories perhaps never to be reconciled to the idea of independence for India.

By the end of August 1942, echoing the opinion of the governors of the provinces, Linlithgow pointed out that the movement was not spontaneous, as claimed by the Indian National Congress, and that 'there has been a considerable degree of organization'[18] especially in the large tracts of UP, Bihar and parts of Maharashtra. The notes of the UP Provincial Congress Committee of July 1942 and other articles seized during the raids in other provinces showed that the police stations had been attacked in an organized manner; communication systems had been interfered with; parallel governments had been formed after the overthrow of British authority in some districts of eastern UP such as Ballia and the entire Satara–Sangli belt of Maharashtra, which continued to function for months as free governments.

The central government was 'puzzled' at the failure of 'our intelligence' in not being able to keep it informed of the intensity of anti-government sentiments.[19] Maurice Hallett, the Governor of UP, described the situation as one of 'rebellion' and Linlithgow justified the government's bold and sudden move 'to hit the movement pretty hard'.[20] He maintained: 'Had we not moved when we did and had we given the Congress another fortnight or three weeks while metaphysical discussion took place with Gandhi on the precise meanings of words and phrases, we could have had a more serious situation to handle.'[21] There was no doubt that the movement was widespread and consisted of mob violence in many parts of India. Dr S. Radhakrishnan, then vice-chancellor of Benaras Hindu University (BHU), who became President of the Indian Republic after independence, protested to the government for having occupied the BHU campus and vacating the hostels of students; he also wrote to Gandhi to take firm steps to direct the movement 'in proper channels'.[22] He told Gandhi that his so-called non-violent movement had degenerated into mob violence. 'Here in Benaras', Radhakrishan said, 'I have been hearing of disturbances in villages, looting of granaries, burning of stations and derailing of trains, etc... Your demand for independence is perfectly right. Your appeal to Britain to implement her professions so far as India is concerned is quite right, and I am deeply concerned that the British government have not come to a settlement with India when you are leading the nation.' But that does not mean that the movement should be accompanied by arson,

looting and violence. Every form of struggle and political action was alleged to have had Gandhi's 'sanction', which ought to stop, he pointed out.[23] But it seems the movement had no leaders and the leaderless army took the law into its own hands. That is how it became a people's movement during the greater part of August–September 1942.

It is interesting to examine the activities of the War Cabinet in London. The War Cabinet W.M. (42) meeting took note of the fact, with some surprise too, that 'there was no communal trouble in any part of India', and that the widespread interference with the communication system indicated 'pre-mediated purpose' while the results suggested that 'the Congress had not had the time to perfect the organization'.[24] This supported Linlithgow's stand. At another meeting of the War Cabinet W.M. (42), it was concerned to note that the whipping laws under section 3 of the Whipping Act 1941 had been invoked by the Bombay government, perhaps to contain 'arson, rioting or personal violence'.[25] The War Cabinet was not unduly worried about the poor Indian being flogged but wanted 'to ascertain which instrument was used for carrying out sentences of corporal punishment in India'. Its concern seems to have been 'whether some statement could not be issued for guidance of the press in this country or the United States indicating the limited extent to which the courts would in fact, impose sentences of corporal punishments, in these cases'.[26] The Indian press was gagged but somehow news of such excessive punishments was bound to leak into the Western media and would evoke feelings of concern.

The Prime Minister, at the War Cabinet W.M. (42) meeting held on 31 August 1942, expressed his gratitude to Lord Linlithgow for 'the firmness with which the Government of India had dealt with the situation in India'.[27] He went on to comment that 'the limited response to the revolutionary campaigns of the Congress Party had provided a practical demonstration that the Congress does not represent the masses of Indian people'.[28] On what premise the conclusions of the Prime Minister were based is not clear. On the same day, Linlithgow, in a 'personal and immediate' telegram 'for Prime Minister', gave a different picture altogether of the situation prevailing in India: 'I am engaged here in meeting by far the most serious rebellion since that of 1857, the gravity and extent of which we have so far concealed from the world for reasons of military security. Mob violence remains rampant over large tracts of the countryside and I am by no means confident that it may not see in September a formidable attempt to renew the widespread sabotage of our war effort. The lives of Europeans in outlying places are in jeopardy.'[29] Was the Prime Minister deliberately misleading the War Cabinet or was he 'concealing' facts from his colleagues for reasons of military security? Why was he so keen to mislead by saying that the Congress did not represent the masses in India?

Penderel Moon, a distinguished member of the Indian Civil Service, serving at that time in the Punjab, said 'Amritsar city was totally Congress minded'.[30] On 3 December 1942 he wrote to his father, after reading the *Review of World Affairs* sent by the latter, about the Congress movement of 1942: 'the remarks about India are not wide of the mark though unduly coloured by anti-Congress bias. It is for instance wrong to say that Congress has no claim whatever to represent India, for certainly it does represent India more nearly than any other single party. It is also not true that the Congress party record in provincial government was not good.'[31] He continued about the provincial governments led by the Congress during 1937–39: 'of all the provincial governments Madras was probably the most successful' of which C. Rajagopalachari was the Prime Minister. Again he took exception to the fact that Indian leaders were being maligned by the British press. He said, 'the insinuation that Nehru's socialism is not congenial, is, I believe, wholly malicious'.[32]

Of course, Moon argued, 'India is not enthusiastic about war'; he commented that 'If we had secured the Congress cooperation and once a national government came in existence and functioned Hindu–Muslim questions, Pakistan and all the rest of it would have melted away.'[33] Moon, like other enlightened observers, believed that the failure of the Cripps mission was a tragedy and the responsibility for it must squarely be placed on Linlithgow. The same was true of the Hindu–Muslim antagonism which was fostered and encouraged by the British according to Moon. A sustained deliberate policy of Linlithgow nurtured Muslim solidarity and Muslim nationalism as a counterpoise to political consciousness generated by Congress-led movements which had brought about a tremendous national upsurge and awakening in India.

Linlithgow's role at the beginning of the world war was considered inept and inadequate by most officers, including Moon. On the Hindu–Muslim problem he felt that 'it has been forced to the forefront by the Viceroy's own ineptitude'. Besides, he doubted 'whether Linlithgow has the brains, the personality, or the vigorous persistence, which is certainly required to effect a compromise between Congress and the Muslim League'.[34] Here Moon was wrong in assuming that Linlithgow was interested in effecting any compromise between the two elements. In fact, it is more accurate to say that he was determined to drive a wedge between them rather than bring about a lasting conciliation. On 2 November 1940, Moon wrote to his father when Linlithgow, who was complaining of fatigue and sought retirement, was given an extension: 'Like everyone else out here, I am appalled at the disastrous and second-rate man Linlithgow getting an extension. I suppose they can't spare anyone else.'[35] Moon went one step further in making an assessment of Linlithgow's qualities: 'Whenever the present Viceroy has an opportunity of doing a foolish thing he takes it.'[36] He had ordered the arrest of Vinoba Bhave around that time. Moon

pointed out: 'the arguments which the Viceroy tries to justify his action are pitifully inadequate. One often wonders whether after five years he has learnt anything about India. He seems to imagine that practical affairs in the country can be managed according to the rules of syllogism. Neither he nor his advisers ever seem to have the slightest idea of what Gandhi is thinking or intending, indeed they themselves admit they find him baffling...'[37]

Having thrown the entire leadership of the Congress along with its workers and supporters behind bars, Linlithgow hoped to carry on with government business through his powerful and coercive administrative machinery. Yet there was tension and sullenness all over the country, including among the different political groups who were outside jail. Several representative groups met in September and appealed to the Prime Minister for better political sense. Syama Prasad Mookerjee, working President of the All India Hindu Mahasabha, took the lead. He was able to secure support for the appeal from Khan Bahadur Allah Baksh, President of the Azad Muslim Conference and chief minister of Sind; Nawab K. Habibullah of Dacca and minister in Bengal; Muhammad Zaheeruddin, President of the All India Momin Conference; Dr S.S. Ansari, general secretary of the Azad Muslim Board; Meher Chand Khanna of the Frontier Hindu Sabha; N.C. Chatterjee, working President of the Bengal Hindu Mahasabha; and prominent representatives of the Sikh community, such as Baldev Singh, Master Tara Singh, Giani Kartar Singh and Dr S. Radhakrishnan, vice-chancellor of Benaras Hindu University. The appeal dated 10 September 1942 stated:

> We feel that an atmosphere of violence and counter violence is hardly the atmosphere for a satisfactory reconciliation between India and Great Britain.
>
> If Great Britain is willing to grant self-government to India after the war, what is it that prevents its accomplishment today? A national government pledged to the support of the war against the aggressors consisting of representatives of major political interests with complete autonomy in the internal administration during the period of war and unfettered freedom thereafter, will satisfy the demand for independence put forth by all the political parties of the country. Such a declaration of immediate transfer of real power to Indian hands postponing all controversial issues until after the war will produce the right atmosphere for dissolving differences and harnessing the divergent tendencies which are now overemphasized.[38]

Such a reasoned appeal was not heeded by the British government. The Indian members of the Viceroy's Executive Council asked for action on

what Linlithgow termed 'forbidden topics of Indianization and non-official advisers in the provinces'. Ramaswamy Mudaliar, H.P. Mody, Sultan Ahmed and Nalini Sarkar were all for Indianization. Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar had already resigned from the Executive Council.[39] Yet Winston Churchill was not prepared to 'abdicate', as it was stated pompously.

Around the time when the demand for independence was being debated at different levels of the Congress Party and when the Quit India call was only a vague possibility, it was rumoured that Jinnah was prepared to negotiate with Gandhi. Linlithgow termed such a move, if at all there was one, as 'Jinnah's game of poker'. What transpired in between, when the desire for negotiations with Gandhi was expressed, and in fact when no negotiation of any kind materialized, no one seems to know. Only a trail of rumours was left behind. The Muslim League working committee resolution of 20 August 1942, however, ended any speculation regarding the Jinnah–Gandhi dialogue.

The Muslim League resolution termed the Quit India call as an invitation 'to open rebellion' and declared that the movement's main objective was 'not only to coerce the British government into handing over power to a Hindu oligarchy...but also to force the Musalmans to submit and surrender to the Congress terms and dictation'. Furthermore, the resolution called upon the Muslims to abstain from any participation in the movement initiated by the Congress, and observed that 'Pakistan is the only solution of India's constitutional problem'.[40] The resolution demonstrated a total identity of interests with the British. It is noteworthy that Jinnah, who was careful in the choice of words, phrases and construction of sentences, stated in the same paragraph and in the same sentence that the Quit India Movement was meant 'to coerce the British', on the one hand, and to force the Musalmans to submit to the Congress on the other. The rumours about a dialogue thus proved to be only rumours. After all, Jinnah had every reason to be pleased with the Cripps proposals which accepted the principle of 'Pakistan in essence'. He rejected the proposals on the grounds of their being vague and lacking precision in defining the idea of Pakistan. Yet, he must have been extremely grateful to the British and would not hesitate to make a common cause with them rather than with the Congress. Hereafter, the Jinnah–Linlithgow–Churchill alliance continued. Jinnah's position was weakened, however, with the defeat of Winston Churchill's Conservative Party in the elections of July 1945 in England.

Gandhi's fast was another matter which evoked considerable attention among British politicians and governors. The British public showed much interest in the health bulletins issued every day during Gandhi's fast for penance and self-purification. The government of India often showed concern about his health for the wrong reasons. Way back in May 1933, when Gandhi completed his 21-day fast, Lord Willingdon, then Viceroy of

India, wrote to Malcolm Hailey, Governor of UP: 'I own, I never expected him to be removed from the planet however satisfactory it might have been to me from an administrative point of view.'[41] Malcolm Hailey confided to the nawab of Chhattari: 'I think the world will be well rid of such a problem person and should be glad to see him starve himself out of life.'[42] In February 1943, Gandhi's decision to undertake a fast created a lot of tension in India. The discussion on the question of Gandhi's fast went on for some months. Gandhi was in British custody undergoing imprisonment. Hence there was a legitimate fear in official circles that, if Gandhi died while residing in the jail, it would create a problem of law and order. The question was asked whether he should not be released to undertake the fast; if he survived his fast he could be rearrested. Amery's diary entry of 5 January 1943 outlined the problem: 'Personally I should be all for letting Gandhi fast to death if he likes. However great the sensation at the moment, in the long run, India is unlikely to make any progress while he is alive. But evidently Lumly [Governor of Bombay] and the government are too frightened of the immediate consequences and, I expect, the Viceroy's Executive will take the same line.'[43] In fact the Indian members of the Viceroy's Executive Council, M.S. Aney, H.P. Mody and Nalini Sarkar, resigned from the Executive Council on 17 February 1943 regretting that the Viceroy's attitude towards Gandhi was not conciliatory.[44] Roger Lumly, the Governor of Bombay, under whose jurisdiction Gandhi was lodged, asked the Viceroy to release Gandhi immediately. On 23 February 1943, President Roosevelt asked the British government to come to terms with Gandhi. On 1 March 1943, while Gandhi's fast continued, Amery ruminated: 'Gandhi seems to be an astute politician who has assumed mysticism for political purposes and may end by being forgotten as a mischievous politician and only resembled [*sic*] as a real saint.'[45]

Gandhi began his three-week fast on 9 February 1943. Winston Churchill telegraphed the Viceroy on 13 February asking him to ascertain whether he was being administered glucose. The Viceroy replied in the negative: 'I am told that his present medical attendant tried to persuade him to take glucose yesterday and again today and that he refused absolutely.'[46] On 22 February, Churchill again sought information regarding Gandhi: 'The old humbug Gandhi whose hunger strike is lasting much longer than we were assured was possible; so much so one wonders his fast is bona fide.' Again on 24 February, Churchill sent a telegram to the Viceroy: 'Now at the fifteenth day bulletin looks as if he might get through. Surely, with all these Congress Hindu doctors round him it is quite easy to slip glucose or other nourishment into his food.'[47] On the sixteenth day of Gandhi's hunger strike, Gandhi was still alive. Winston Churchill informed General Smuts: 'I do not think Gandhi has the slightest intention of dying and I imagine he has been eating better meals than I have for the last week. It looks now highly probable that he will see his fast out. What

fools we have been to flinch before all the bluff and sob-stuff.'[48] On the following day, 26 March, there was another telegram from Churchill to Linlithgow: 'It now seems almost certain that the old rascal will emerge all the better for his so-called fast.'[49] Churchill advised: 'The weapon of ridicule so far as compatible with the dignity of the Government of India, should certainly be employed.'

On 27 February 1943, Winston Churchill eulogized Linlithgow: 'Your own strong, cool, sagacious handling of the matter has given me the greatest confidence and satisfaction.' Encouraged by the praise received from the Prime Minister, Linlithgow informed him: 'I have long known Gandhi as the world's most successful humbug and have not the least doubt his physical condition and bulletins representing it from day to day have been deliberately told so as to produce the maximum effect on public opinion.' Linlithgow continued: 'Britain has won an important victory which will help to discredit a wicked system of blackmail and terror and I am much obliged for your staunch support.'[50] Gandhi's fast ended on 3 March 1943; he was released soon after on grounds of bad health.

The prestige of the British ruling classes in the colonial setting was not a matter to be trifled with. Any attempt at lowering the prestige of the highest seat of power, that of the Viceroy, in the eyes of the subject peoples of India could not be tolerated. To persons like Winston Churchill and Linlithgow, imbued as they were in the Victorian cultural milieu and ethos, any erosion of the Viceroy's authority, power and prestige was regarded as a matter of serious concern. To uphold the prestige of the government was to sustain the imperial structure of power. Kenneth Ballhatchet, in his delightful and illuminating treatise on *Race, Sex and Class under the Raj*, examined imperial attitudes in India observing how 'the English class attitudes were transformed into racial attitudes in an imperial setting',[51] leading to an unabrigeable social distance between the rulers and the ruled. By bypassing the Viceroy and the commander-in-chief and in reaching an agreement with Jawaharlal Nehru on the defence formula, Stafford Cripps and Colonel Louis Johnson had, unwittingly, compromised the position of the Viceroy, disturbing the prestige and invincibility of the supreme authority in India. The tories must continue to preserve 'the classical model of dominance and subordination'[52] even at the sunset of British empire, however anachronistic it might appear to others. Prime Minister Winston Churchill vindicated the Viceroy's stand and recalled Stafford Cripps forthwith without allowing him to conclude the agreement.

It is interesting to note what the Aga Khan, a great dignitary with pro-British sympathies, had to say about the British ruling classes towards the last years of the British Raj. He recalled that, even in the Victorian age in the 1890s, relations between the British and Indians were amiable and without strain, especially at the highest level of society. He related the story

that 'Sir Jamsetje Jeejeebhoy, a notable figure in the Parsee community in Bombay, gave a reception for the Viceroy and Vicereine, Lord and Lady Dufferin, for the Governor of Bombay and his wife, Lord and Lady Reay, and for the Duke of Connaught and Duchess of Connaught... Sir Jeejeebhoy as host offered his arm to Lady Dufferin and went into the supper room, and the Viceroy followed with his hostess, Lady Jeejeebhoy, and everyone else went after in turn. But later such warm-hearted gracefulness was unthinkable.'[53] Rigid protocol replaced easy good manners. The 'concept of empire turned into imperialism', according to him, which was nothing but 'social vulgarity, and worse, social aggressiveness and highhandedness'.[54] As the nationalist agitation peaked to a widespread mass movement the 'imperialist' in the Englishman became more and more defeatist, aggressive and overbearing.

The Aga Khan observed:

> What happened to the Englishman has been to me all my life a source of wonder and astonishment. Suddenly it seemed that he felt that his prestige as a member of an imperial, governing race would be lost if he accepted those of a different colour as fundamentally his equals. The colour bar was no longer thought of as a physical difference, but far more dangerously – in the end disastrously – as an intellectual and spiritual difference. As long as Indians who adopted and imitated the European way of life were few it was possible for a servant and upholder of the Raj to feel that there was little danger of his unique position being undermined by familiarly and overthrown by numbers. But now racialism – on both sides – marched on with giant strides. It was soon not merely a matter of the relationship between British rulers and the Indian-ruled. The pernicious theory spread that all Asiatics were a second-class race, and that 'white men' possessed some intrinsic and unchallengeable superiority.[55]

The root cause of such an attitude was fear of losing position and power; the British felt increasingly diffident and insecure and were determined to pose as if they had 'their moral, intellectual and biological right to rule others'.[56] If these attitudinal traits were witnessed in the British ruling classes, their racist consciousness was only slightly different from those of the fascists against whom they were waging war. The nationalist leaders, among other reasons, took serious exception to such traits and were determined to fight them in the streets.

Winston Churchill's attitudes conformed to these traits. Lord Moran, Winston Churchill's physician and a lifelong companion, records in his diary that the Prime Minister did mention to him in one of the rare moments when Churchill faced truth: 'how some Indians had been

treated with contempt... If we had made friends with them and taken into our lives instead of restricting our intercourse to the political field, things might have been very different.'[57] Also he confessed: 'When you learn to think of a race as inferior beings it is difficult to get rid of that way of thinking; when I was a subaltern the Indian did not seen to me equal to the white man.'[58] And again Winston Churchill was unable to shake off his age-old racial prejudice. Lord Moran recorded in his diary on 24 November 1943 when Madame and Chiang Kai-Shek dined with him on that day: 'Winston thinks only the colour of their skin, it is when he talks of India or China that you remember he is a Victorian.'[59] Such an attitude was responsible for the failure of the Cripps mission. It is doubtful whether negotiations would have been called off if the representatives had come from the white dominions, of Canada or Australia for example.

After the failure of the Cripps mission when, however unwittingly, the Congress was driven into the wilderness by Linlithgow's misguided actions, the Congress launched what Gandhi had called his 'biggest' movement against the British. The Quit India Movement was ruthlessly suppressed: the brute force employed by the government 'to reconquer' the land brought even Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Sir Jagdish Prasad, both British supporters, to argue that 'unspeakable excesses were being indulged in throughout the country and that the Indian members ought to resign in protest'. J.P. Srivastava, whom they had met to express their 'extreme bitterness', told them that the law-and-order problem fell into the domain of provincial governments and that they should take up the matter with them.[60]

In the aftermath of the Quit India Movement, however, questions were raised in responsible circles in Britain about Linlithgow's leadership and the continued hostility and animosity towards the Indian National Congress. It was argued that the Congress demand had not been too demanding. After all, the question was whose war was it that India should have fought and why? Within a couple of months after the movement was suppressed, which of course was recognized as Linlithgow's supreme contribution, *The Times*, in its leader entitled 'Initiatives in India', commented that 'a more broad-based Government of India was essential if India was to play her full part in upholding her own cause and of the United Nations'. The leader, while recognizing that it was Britain's duty 'to retain power in India', urged the government to bring about 'the Indianization of the Viceroy's Council by handing over to Indians the remaining and all important portfolios of finance and home affairs, and the control of defence limited only by the power that must be exercised by the Commander-in-Chief in time of war'.[61] This was exactly what Stafford Cripps had proposed in 'the defence formula' during his abortive mission in India, and this was what the Indian National Congress was only too willing to accept to participate fully in the war effort. It was remarkable

indeed that even the Conservative mouthpiece like *The Times* asked the government to grasp an opportunity for furtherance of goodwill in the subcontinent. There are 'overwhelmingly strong' reasons 'why the British Government cannot accept the destructive attitude by the Congress party as a sufficient reason for inaction', *The Times* maintained.[62] Instead of appreciating the significance of the argument and beginning a new phase of 'initiative', Lord Linlithgow was anxious to find out the 'source and reasons why we had no warning of so abrupt and important change of front'.[63] *The Times*, however, continued to press its point of view until almost the end of the year, to the annoyance of Linlithgow. He thought that *The Times* had become 'a nuisance' and displayed his usual political manoeuvring skills by asking Amery whether *The Telegraph* could be approached to toe the tory line, although the influence of *The Times* was dominant in Britain.[64]

Linlithgow's worry did not end with *The Times* leader. Sir George Schuster attacked the government's 'lack of vision, urgency and drive' in his letter to *The Times* of 14 October 1942, where he quoted Colonel Johnson's remark that 'India has a fairly good job of war production; but it is a peace-time job'. Schuster continued: 'Let us be frank. It has been a record of failure to give inspiring leadership or to rise to the occasion.'[65] Laithwaite and Turnbull had sent a rejoinder, prompted by Linlithgow, under Sir Hugh O'Neill's signature, but *The Times* had not published it.[66] While Schuster wanted the 'right men' to be found, Winston Churchill decided to give a third extension to Lord Linlithgow on 8 December 1942.[67] Schuster was regarded as one of the most knowledgeable people of Indian affairs in England. He was finance member in the Viceroy's Council between 1928 and 1934 and was a National Liberal MP thereafter. Way back in December 1941, he had advocated 'a fully representative Cabinet with widest popular support at the centre' and resumption of popular provincial governments with coalition ministries.[68] He had been supported in his views by Edward Thompson. These positive approaches, however, were ignored at home and in India. Even the followers of Linlithgow, like Jam Sahib of Nawanagar or Sir Ramaswamy Mudaliar, called for 'Indianization of the Council, change of its designation and removal of Whitehall interference'. Amery was, however, satisfied that Jam Sahib was critical of the Congress policy and Gandhi and that served as a 'first rate propaganda value and carried great weight coming from this source'.[69]

No one seems to have appreciated Linlithgow's overbearing and outdated attitude to Indian problems. Phillips, an American observer close to President Roosevelt, met Lord Halifax on 14 May 1943 in Washington to tell him that the Indian situation was 'one of increasing bitterness and total loss of confidence in British purpose'. Other points made by him were: first, 'that an Indian and not the Viceroy should be charged with the unenviable task of getting a government together'; second, 'the

government could be constituted on a basis of 50:50 as between Hindus and Muslims'; third, 'an advisory military committee' composed of a British, Indian, US and Chinese officer may be formed to prosecute the war; and, finally, 'the new Viceroy must make some such effort as the above to break the log-jam and that it would have great effect if accompanied by message from the King-Emperor'.[70] Phillips also met Churchill on 23 May 1943 in Washington. As far as Winston Churchill was concerned 'no issue of any consequence' was raised by him.[71] Churchill wrote to Attlee and Amery of his 'most depressing and unsatisfactory interview' with Phillips, whom he described as 'a weak agreeable man who has had all the grievances of India poured into his ears and appears to be very ill-informed about the enormous advances in self-government that have been made especially in the Provinces. His two points were, the desirability of a proclamation by the King-Emperor to the effect that we really did mean to keep our word about being kicked out in due course, and second, to form an Indian Ministry now, giving them power to manage their own Home Affairs . . . He said they wanted power at the centre. I replied that while we were responsible for the defence of India, we could not mar the integrity of control.'[72]

Linlithgow's farewell speech delivered on 2 August 1943 pleased none, at least in Britain. The refrain in his speech was 'if India wants a change it was up to her to clear the ground for it'.[73] He had complicated 'the ground' in the most intractable manner and it was not possible for anyone to clear it unless the new Viceroy showed greater foresight and wisdom than Linlithgow had hitherto shown. He was furious with Amery that 'editorials critical of our policy as expounded in my speech' appeared in the *News Chronicle* which proceeded to describe 'the Government of India as virtual dictatorship'. He argued with Amery, 'with your own great influence with key men in the newspaper world you might as well have insured us against the negative reaction'.[74] He had not anticipated such critical leading articles appearing in the British dailies; he did not realize that he deserved them.

In the aftermath of the Quit India Movement good relations between Jinnah and the British ruling classes continued. Jinnah assured them that he would not do business 'with Gandhi until he accepted Pakistan and abandons his revolutionary policy and programme of last August'.[75] Meanwhile, Governor Glancy reported that even in the Punjab, which had resisted the Pakistan idea owing to the influence of Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, 'the Pakistan slogan is gaining momentum and there is a general feeling of uneasiness'.[76] With the death of Sikander Hyat Khan in December 1942, the Sikander–Jinnah pact had lapsed, opening the way for interference in the Punjab problem by Jinnah and his Muslim League.

In Britain, Prime Minister Churchill postulated in no uncertain terms that 'it is not a suitable time to form a responsible government in the main

on Gandhi. If such a course is adopted, we must expect renewal of agitation throughout India, the future of every race, class, creed and party being thrown into the melting pot at a time when there is a serious food shortage in some provinces and when we have an enormously swollen army of a very much lower quality than we have ever seen before.'[77] This was the essence of the India policy memorandum which he placed before the War Cabinet on 6 October 1943, advising the Viceroy-designate Lord Wavell that it was pointless to talk to Gandhi 'who had done his utmost to weaken the defence of the country . . . by raising the cry of Quit India'; unless Wavell was unable to maintain conditions in India satisfactory for the military operations against Japan, 'without negotiating with Mr Gandhi and the Congress, a very grave issue would arise which we should have to consider on its merits'.[78]

On the day when he submitted his India policy memorandum to the War Cabinet, Churchill delivered a speech at the farewell dinner in honour of Lord Wavell, who was proceeding to India to take over the viceroyalty of India from Lord Linlithgow. Churchill started with 'I am in a state of subdued resentment about the way in which the world has failed to recognize the great achievements of Britain in India . . . ' He went on to emphasize: 'This episode in Indian history will surely become the Golden Age as time passes. When the British gave the peace, order, and there was justice for the poor, and all men were shielded from outside damages. The Golden Age. And I wish we may claim the work we have done, the great work we have done, standing alone for a whole year under this storm; and we ought to be proud of the work we have done in India as we are of the contribution which we have made, the great contribution which we have made to . . . freedom of the whole world.'[79]

It was a display of the lack of common sense on the part of Winston Churchill to have characterized British rule in India in 1943 as 'the Golden Age' of Indian history. In passing, however, he recognized that 'the horrors of war and the dislocation of war have given us taste of them again'. He was referring to the famine of 1943. Otherwise, according to him, 'famines have passed away . . . and pestilence had gone, disease have diminished, vast works of construction bear the British achievements'.[80] According to one estimate, more than 30 million people died in India owing to plague, influenza, cholera and other kinds of disease between 1901 and 1947, yet Churchill thought otherwise and boasted of the great achievements of Britain in India. The Bengal famine of 1943 was a 'man-made famine' of British rule. More than 3 million people died during that calamity. Lord Wavell stressed the point in his strongly worded telegram to the Secretary of State for India and Prime Minister Churchill: 'Bengal famine was one of the greatest disasters that has befallen any people under British rule and dangerous to our reputation here both among Indians and foreigners in India is incalculable.'[81]

The Bengal famine illustrates the callousness and negligence on the part of the Linlithgow government and Winston Churchill's Cabinet which resulted in a huge loss of life in India. The Governor of Bengal, Jack Herbert, conveyed on 2 July 1943 to Lord Linlithgow the seriousness of the food situation in Bengal. Herbert had written to Linlithgow several times earlier, emphasizing the need to take firm steps to control food prices; to send more grain to Bengal from other provinces; and to give up the free trade policy which led to hoarding and black-marketing of food items. Herbert wrote: 'Hitherto I have studiously avoided overreacting to the case and I have faithfully reported day to day alleviation of the position; I am now in some doubt whether I have not erred in the direction of under statement.' He pointed out: 'The basic plan was contemplated sending an agreed total of nearly 3,70,000 tons of rice to Bengal over a period of a year to be received from December 1942. Actually in the 7 months from December 1942 to June 1943 only a little over 44,000 tons reached Bengal... the most glaring discrepancy is in the case of Bihar whence 1,85,000 tons were promised and we have received only about 1,000 tons.'[82] He suggested that 'the remedy, I am sure is to abandon the attempt to rely on the goodwill of the various provinces... and the Central Government itself to undertake that administration in the various provinces and coordinating Central Executive Officer over them with supreme authority throughout the area'.[83] Giving 'a fair chance to free trade is however desirable (as) a long-term policy... but while free trade develops – I hope it will – Bengal is rapidly approaching starvation. The reports from the districts can only be described as alarming and unless we can get in food grains on something like the scale originally promised the law and order and the labour situation will get out of hand.'[84] Linlithgow, after reading the account given by his own Governor, recorded in the margin: 'I wonder how far he is right about the Bengal situation, about food in other provinces.'[85] This was the kind of treatment Linlithgow gave to a matter of grave crisis involving millions of unfortunate people of Bengal. This was callousness, pure and simple. Linlithgow knew about the seriousness of the food situation and that the mortality rate in Bengal by July had reached more than 1–1.5 million; he himself had told Wavell.[86]

Linlithgow functioned through 'my advisers' and his Food Department officials, as stated in most of his letters to Amery. He never visited Bengal to gain first-hand information of the situation. Probably he was not interested. It is quite a coincidence that most of the coastal districts, wherein starvation deaths occurred during the famine, were involved in the Quit India agitation. Besides, he felt his responsibility was over when he wrote to the War Cabinet for imports of food grain. On 13 August 1943, his private telegram to Amery stated: 'Fully appreciate difficulties that confront the Cabinet. But I am bound in duty to represent critical note of the difficulties that will face us here unless decision contained in your telegram is modified.

A firm promise of 100,000 tons of barley and the possibility of small additional quantity of wheat will go nowhere in meeting our essential demands.'[87] On 29 July 1943, Linlithgow had asked for 300,000 tons of food grain, especially wheat. He said at the same time that these were meant for defence requirements but that he would say in public that the imported wheat would be made available for the general population as well. He concluded his telegram: 'The propaganda value of this would be great indeed.'[88] He seemed more interested in propaganda, than resolving the problem. He warned the Cabinet: 'I can't be responsible for continuing stability of India now, or for her capacity to serve as a base against Japan next year unless we have appropriate help in prospect... If they are not prepared to modify their decision, we here can take no responsibility for the consequences.'[89] He was leaving India shortly; his responsibility could hardly be counted upon. As far as Winston Churchill's attitude was concerned it was 'still unsympathetic but he might realize the necessity of action on a most substantial scale than he has hitherto contemplated but I don't see any prospect of the million and a half tons that your long-term committee have recommended'.[90] Lord Wavell was present at the meeting of the Cabinet held on 24 September 1943 at which it was decided that 100,000 tons of barley from Iraq and 50,000 tons of wheat from the Mediterranean would be sent to India. The Prime Minister told Wavell: 'more could not be provided without taking it from Egypt and Middle East where reserve was being accumulated for Greece and Balkans'. Wavell commented in his journal: 'Apparently it is more important to save the Greeks and the liberated countries from starvation than the Indians and there is reluctance either to provide shipping or reduce stocks in this country. I pointed out military considerations and that practically the whole of India outside the rural districts was more or less engaged in war effort and that it is impossible to differentiate and feed only those actually fighting or making munitions or working some particular railways, as PM had suggested.'[91] That was the crux of the issue: the decision to send food was made because the entire Indian territory was bristling with soldiers. Wheat and other food stuffs were collected for their needs and sent through road transport and railways; ignoring the Bengal famine conditions.

The Famine Commission Report of 1948 stated: 'the ultimate cause of famine was a serious shortage of rice'; with the occupation of Burma by the Japanese, imports of rice from that country were cut off. However, studies have shown that the famine conditions developed owing to a breakdown of the rice market in late 1942 under the stress of war. A sample survey of economic after-effects and mortality due to the famine, which was carried out in 1944 and 1945 by Professor P.C. Mahalonobis and his colleagues of the Indian Statistical Institute, suggest that the famine was caused by the combination of factors arising out of war, bad weather and bad rulers. By

May 1942, an estimated 300,000 refugees from Burma had entered Bengal. From Chittagong itself nearly 2,000–3,000 refugees were coming daily. The 'boat denial scheme' was started by the government under the charge of Pinnell, private secretary of the Viceroy in May 1942, which brought about a catastrophe in the coastal regions. Nearly 65,000 boats were removed and destroyed depriving thousands of families of their living.[92] Another defence measure by which farm lands were acquired for air-strips and camps for soldiers drove at least 30,000–36,000 families from their lands. Meagre compensation ranging from ten to 100 rupees was given to the deprived families. These people were destined to die of starvation in times of distress.[93] The regions which were affected by the government measures were Chittagong, Noakhali, Tippera, Bakerganj, Khulna, 24 Parganas and Midnapur. Even Pinnell recognized that 'the economic life of the lower delta was throttled' until the controls on boat travel were removed in March 1943.[94] This scorched-earth policy led to the complete destruction of the internal economy, trade and commerce. The cyclone of October 1942 damaged crops worth Rs 100 million and nearly 250,000 Bengalis were ruined there.[95] Throughout, Linlithgow merely watched, doing precious little to relieve distress except extending *tacavi* loans and remission of revenues.

In contrast to Linlithgow's inaction and lukewarm response to the challenges posed by the crisis, which cost millions of lives, Lord Wavell rushed to Calcutta within a week of taking charge of the viceroyalty of India and galvanized the entire government apparatus to tackle the 'man-made' crisis. He employed the army to aid of the civil administration. He introduced rationing in all towns, small and big, in Bengal including Calcutta; supervized personally the running of kitchens for destitutes in Calcutta; toured the districts affected by famine; and brought the government agencies to deal with the situation. All this and much more was done by the soldier Viceroy in time of great crisis; which was greatly appreciated by the Indians. He bombarded the War Cabinet with telegrams throughout the months of February and March 1944 until he was promised substantial imports of food grain for India for the year 1944. He wired the Prime Minister: 'Attempt by His Majesty's government to prove on the basis of admittedly defective statistics that we can do without the help demanded would be regarded here by all opinion, British and Indian, as utterly indefensible . . . I warn His Majesty's government with all seriousness that if they refuse our demands they are risking a catastrophe of far greater dimensions than Bengal famine. They must either trust the opinion of the man they have appointed to advise them on Indian affairs or replace him.'[96] Such courage born of humanity had seldom been displayed in the annals of British rule in India. What a contrast he was to the man whom he had succeeded a few months ago as Viceroy!

In November 1943, Wavell called the Governors' Conference to discuss the food situation and presented a memorandum drawn up by himself. In the same month the War Cabinet meeting dealt with shipments of food grain to India. Amery was overwhelmed with Wavell's efforts to grapple with the problem of famine. He sent a private and secret telegram on 3 November 1943 appreciating his concerted drive: 'I need not say how glad I was to hear of your prompt action in looking at the Bengal situation for yourself and at once raising your personal influence to make the Bengal government to do the right things. It has obviously had an excellent effect on the spot and also here, where it will generally ease my task in tomorrow's debate. The Indian famine situation has stirred the people here deeply and their natural concern has been fully exploited by all the left wing elements who are in any case anxious to find a stick with which to beat the government dog.'[97] In March 1944, the Cabinet offered 250,000 tons for 1944 and 150,000 tons of rice in exchange for 150,000 tons of wheat.[98] 'The SOS even makes the suggestion that I should announce the import of 400,000 tons of wheat and conceal for the time being the import of 150,000 tons of rice. I shall do nothing so dishonest or stupid. And I shall not let HMG think they have solved India's problem for 1944 by 250,000 tons when I have told them all along 10,000,000 is the minimum. I think I have to resign to bring the situation home to them. They refuse to approach the Americans for shipping.'[99]

Previously, the government of Lord Linlithgow, fully supported by the Governors of the British Indian provinces, had helped in building up the Muslim League in the provinces. As the Congress-led governments had resigned displaying 'lamentable lack of foresight and wisdom', as opined by the insider V.P. Menon,[100] the governors ruled under section 93 of the constitution as despots. The legislative assemblies were not dissolved despite the breakdown of governments which had enjoyed Congress majorities in them. Of the 18 advisers appointed to assist the governors, only three were Indians. The Muslim League had pledged full support to British government in India, and in return reaped great advantages.

In Assam, Bengal and Sind the Muslim League was precariously placed. Prompted by the Linlithgow government's declared policy of strengthening the hands of the Muslim League, the provincial governments threw away all constitutional norms to mount Muslim League ministries in full command in the provinces.

In Sind, for instance, the Allah Baksh ministry, enjoying a majority, was in power until, prompted by the Governor's interference, a political crisis developed. Allah Baksh gave the Governor the opportunity for intervention. On 19 September 1942 Allah Baksh renounced the title of Khan Bahadur and the OBE conferred on him by the British. This was taken by the Governor as a hostile act against the government, and Allah Baksh was asked to resign. When he refused, the Governor, Sir Hugh Dow, dismissed

him as premier although he enjoyed a clear majority in the legislature; Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, who had served under Allah Baksh as a minister, was appointed premier with Muslim League support. Later, Hidayatullah entered into an agreement with Jinnah and managed to pass the Pakistan resolution in the assembly. The Pakistan idea united the Muslim members, and that is how the Muslim League came into power in Sind. In May 1943, Allah Baksh was assassinated by unidentified assailants.

Similarly, in Bengal, the Governor asked Fazlul Haq to resign from office in March 1943 on the grounds that the administrative measures necessary for the war work were not being taken when Japanese troops were threatening Bengal. Actually, Fazlul Haq was an outstanding Bengali leader, who had incurred the displeasure of Jinnah for not having followed his advice, and had resigned from the Muslim League in 1941. On 16 December 1941, he had formed a new ministry with the cooperation of non-Muslim members. His Cabinet included five Muslims and four Hindus, one of whom was Syama Prasad Mookerjee, leader of the All India Hindu Mahasabha. Haq was also friendly with Congress members. Dr Mookerjee resigned as minister in November 1942 when he came into difficulties with the Governor. It was known that the Governor had called Fazlul Haq and asked him to sign, the resignation letter having been prepared by the Governor. Until 24 April 1943, the Governor ruled Bengal under section 93; then he appointed Sir Khwaja Nazimuddin as premier, a founder of a new Muslim League party. A prominent member of the Nazimuddin cabinet was Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy, who replaced his leader after the election of 1945 as premier of Bengal. During 1943, Bengal witnessed the disastrous famine which took the lives of 3 million people. The Bengal government and the Governor were unable to cope with the crisis. All the same, the Muslim League ministry continued in office unhindered owing to the unfailing support of the European bloc and the Governor of Bengal.

Assam had a similar story. After the Congress ministry left office in October 1939, Sir Mohammad Saadulla formed a government with the support of Hindu members. In December 1941, however, the Saadulla ministry fell owing to the resignation of Rohini Kumar Chowdhary from the Cabinet. Chowdhary claimed a majority in the assembly and declared that he could form the government with the support of Congress members. But both the Governors, Sir Robert Reid, followed by Sir Andrew Clow, did not allow him to form the government owing to the Congress support. In August 1942, Sir Saadulla again formed the ministry with the support of the European bloc.

After having secured the position of the Muslim League in the Muslim-majority provinces, Lord Linlithgow finally departed India in October 1943. His departure was hailed in India; nobody shed a tear for him. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru expressed the prevailing general feeling of the people

of India rather mildly: 'Today, I say, after seven years of Lord Linlithgow's administration the country is much more divided than it was when he came here.' V.P. Menon observed, when Linlithgow left India, 'his 7 1/2 years reign – longer than that of any other Viceroy – was conspicuous by its lack of positive achievement.'[101] Linlithgow's departure was a great relief to Indians. He proved to be a cold-blooded despot during the war years. He hated Indians[102] and through his alleged negligence and callousness he was perceived to be responsible for the deaths during the 'man-made' Bengal famine.

Notes

1 For Linlithgow's 'considered view' on the subject see Linlithgow to Amery, 21 January 1942, paras 14, 23, *Transfer of Power*, I, pp. 48–9.
2 Attlee's memorandum, 2 February 1942, *Transfer of Power*, I, p. 111.
3 Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, p. 426.
4 Churchill to Cripps, 11 April 1942, *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 597, p. 739.
5 AICC resolution, 1 May 1942, see *CWMG*, no. 76, app. III, pp. 424–5.
6 AICC resolution, 8 August 1942, see *CWMG*, no. 76, app. X, pp. 458–61.
7 Nehru's speech moving the Quit India resolution on 8 August 1942.
8 For Gandhi's speech, *CWMG*, no. 76, pp. 384–96. Gandhi first spoke in Hindi; this is the English translation of his Hindi speech. He also spoke in English, which can be seen at *CWMG*, no. 76, pp. 396–401.
9 *CWMG*, no. 76, p. 375.
10 Ibid., p. 299.
11 Ibid., p. 367, f.n. 1.
12 Confidential note prepared by Nehru, 24 July 1942, see D.N. Panigrahi, *Quit India and the Struggle for Freedom* (Delhi: 1984), app. II, pp. 59–61.
13 Gandhi's speech, 8 August 1942, ibid., app. I, p. 78.
14 This account has been culled from the following: G. Sahai, *42 Rebellion: An Authentic Review of the Great Upheaval of 1942* (Delhi: 1947); R.H. Niblett, *The Congress Rebellion in Azamgarh, August–September 1942: As Recorded in the Diary* (Allahabad: 1957); T.S. Chakravorty, *India in Revolt* (Calcutta: 1946); Nehru, *The Discovery of India*. See also *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, vol. XII; M.K. Gandhi, *Correspondence with the Government 1942–44* (Ahmedabad: 1945). These constitute the accounts of participants and eyewitnesses; therefore they are of great historical value.
15 A.C. Bhuyan, *The Quit India Movement: The Second World War and Indian Nationalism* (Delhi: 1975).
16 Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, pp. 430–2. Also see F.G. Hutchins, *Spontaneous Revolution: The Quit India Movement* (Delhi: 1971).
17 Nehru, *Discovery of India*, pp. 430–2.
18 Linlithgow to Amery, 24 August 1942, para 3, *Transfer of Power*, II, no. 625, p. 808.
19 Ibid., para 5.
20 Ibid., para 2.
21 Ibid.
22 S. Radhakrishnan to Gandhi, 23 August 1942, *Transfer of Power*, II, encl. to no. 614, p. 793.
23 Ibid.

24 *Transfer of Power*, II, no. 575, p. 736.
25 Ibid.
26 *Transfer of Power*, II, no. 575, p. 739.
27 Ibid., no. 586, p. 765.
28 Ibid., no. 664, p. 855.
29 Ibid., no. 662, pp. 853–4.
30 Penderel Moon Papers, Mss. Eur. F. 230/17.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
33 Moon to father, 31 January 1940, Penderel Moon Papers, Mss. Eur. F. 230/5.
34 Moon to father, 2 November 1940, ibid.
35 Ibid.
36 Moon to father, 22 October 1940, Penderel Moon Papers, Mss. Eur. F. 230/5.
37 Ibid.
38 S.P. Mookerjee to Laithwaite, PS to Viceroy, 10 September 1942, with the request for appeal to be sent to Prime Minister, *Transfer of Power*, II, no. 728, pp. 936–8; Linlithgow to Amery, 24 August 1942, no. 625, pp. 807–17, see p. 812, para 12.
39 Ibid., para 7, p. 810.
40 Muslim League working committee resolution of 20 August 1942, *Transfer of Power*, II, no. 598, pp. 771–4, see p. 771.
41 29 May 1933, Hailey Papers, Mss. Eur. E. 220/ 26B.
42 Hailey Papers, Mss. Eur. E. 220/26B.
43 *The Leo Amery Diaries*, 5 January 1943, p. 866.
44 Ibid., p. 874.
45 Ibid., p. 875.
46 Gilbert, *Road to Victory, Winston S. Churchill,* p. 343.
47 Ibid., pp. 348, 350.
48 Ibid., p. 350.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
51 K.A. Ballhatchet, *Race, Sex and Class Under the Raj: Imperial Attitudes and Policies and their Critics 1793–1905* (London: 1980), p. 121.
52 Ibid., p. 8.
53 *The Memoirs of Aga Khan: World Enough and Time*, with a foreword by W. Somerset Maugham (London: 1954), p. 25.
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid., p. 27.
56 Ibid., p. 28.
57 *Winston Churchill: The Struggle for Survival, 1940–1965*, taken from the diaries of Lord Moran (London: 1966), pp. 449–50, diary entry, 8 August 1953.
58 Ibid., p. 370, diary entry 19 January 1952.
59 Ibid., p. 131.
60 Linlithgow to Amery, 21 November 1942, *Transfer of Power,* III, no. 205, p. 289.
61 Linlithgow to Amery, 7 October 1942, ibid., no. 75, pp. 105–6, f.n. 1.
62 Ibid.
63 Linlithgow to Amery, 16 October 1942, ibid., no. 98, p. 133.
64 Linlithgow to Amery, 1 November 1942, ibid., no. 131, p. 174.
65 Linlithgow to Amery, 15 October 1942, ibid., no. 95, p. 129, f.n. 2.
66 Ibid., p. 130.
67 Ibid., p. 129.

68 *Transfer of Power*, I, no. 26, p. 54, f.n. 1.
69 Jam Sahib's article appeared in the *Sunday Express* (London) on 11 October 1942; *Transfer of Power*, III, no. 109, p. 143.
70 Halifax to Amery, 17 May 1943, *Transfer of Power*, III, no. 715, pp. 992–3.
71 Churchill to Attlee and Amery, 23 May 1943, ibid., no. 796, p. 1003.
72 Ibid., p. 1004.
73 *Transfer of Power*, IV, no. 68, p. 141.
74 Linlithgow to Amery, 12 August 1943, ibid., no. 77, p. 168.
75 Amery to Churchill, 1 June 1943, *Transfer of Power*, III, no. 752, p. 1031.
76 Gancy to Linlithgow, 27 May 1943, ibid., no. 744, p. 1025.
77 War Cabinet Paper W.P.(43), *Transfer of Power*, IV, no. 165, pp. 379–80.
78 Ibid., no. 164, pp. 375–6.
79 Ibid., p. 376.
80 Ibid.
81 Wavell, *The Viceroy's Journal*, 9 February 1944, p. 54.
82 *Transfer of Power*, IV, no. 27, pp. 42–4.
83 Ibid., para 2, p. 43.
84 Ibid., para 5, p. 43.
85 Ibid., para 7, pp. 44, 45.
86 Wavell, *The Viceroy's Journal*, 19 October 1943, p. 34.
87 *Transfer of Power*, IV, no. 78, p. 169.
88 Ibid., no. 65, p. 137.
89 Ibid., no. 78, p. 169.
90 Amery to Linlithgow, 23 September 1943, ibid., no. 137, p. 313.
91 Wavell, *The Viceroy's Journal*, 24 September 1943, p. 19.
92 Paul R. Greenough, *Prosperity and Misery in Modern Bengal: The Famine of 1943–1944* (New York: 1982), p. 85.
93 Ibid., p. 273.
94 Ibid., pp. 89–90.
95 Ibid., p. 90.
96 Wavell, *The Viceroy's Journal*, 9 February 1944, p. 55.
97 *Transfer of Power*, IV, no. 197, p. 417.
98 4 November 1943, ibid., no. 207, p. 449.
99 Ibid., no. 205, p. 446; also see *The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 61. The SOS had suggested that the GOI should announce food imports of 400,000 tons instead of the 250,000 offered; Viceroy Lord Wavell refused.
100. V.P. Menon, *The Transfer of Power in India* (Bombay: 1957), p. 151.
101. Ibid.
102. Based on the views of Lord Mountbatten as told by him to Lapierre, see Collins and Lapierre, *Mountbatten and the Partition of India*, part I, Interviews, pp. 22–3.

7

FROM SIMLA CONFERENCE TO PARTITION

The Simla Conference, 1945

Lord Wavell's viceroyalty was marred by his disillusionment from the beginning. It was an irony that an honest soldier-Viceroy like Wavell, imbued as he was with a sense of purpose, fairplay and justice, who displayed remarkable dynamism and humanity in handling the crisis created by the Bengal famine, should have failed to reach the height of statesmanship while negotiating with the parties to resolve the constitutional problem. He did not lack the will nor was he devoid of ideas and plans to resolve outstanding issues, yet he did not succeed in his mission, partly because of his own obsessions and partly because of intangible circumstances which were not of his making.

His disillusionment began with Winston Churchill, whose attitude towards solving the Indian problem was ambivalent and hostile. Besides, Churchill's personal animus against Wavell showed itself in unexpected ways. Wavell was conscious that his military career had ended 'with the shadow of failure' for which he blamed Prime Minister Churchill and the Americans.[1] He painfully recalled: 'I think an unmerited opprobrium was cast on me for the Arakan operations which were quite unsupported by the War Cabinet, misunderstood, and misrepresented by the PM partly owing to his pro-American bias . . . [and] partly because he had never liked me.'[2] He noted in his journal how he was offered the Indian viceroyalty: 'A very curious chain of circumstances forced on him [Churchill] my appointment as a Viceroy as the only way out of a difficult place: he was pleased to find it well received, and then horrified to find I had liberal views about India and was prepared to express them.' As a soldier-statesman, he stressed further: 'I accepted the Viceroyalty in the spirit of a military appointment – one goes where one is told in time of war without making conditions or asking questions', but 'I am frankly appalled at the prospect of five years – hard to the mind and soft to the body.'[3] In fact, he was not allowed to complete five years. He was recalled in less than three and half years, making way for the more dramatic and politically gifted Lord Mountbatten. Woodrow Wyatt

felt sorry for Lord Wavell, 'who knew India better than anyone in the Cabinet', commenting: 'As in the war Wavell was unfairly treated, a victim of the prejudices of politicians. The first time it was Churchill; the second Attlee, Cripps and Pethick-Lawrence.'[4]

With the prospect of an Allied victory in the war there was ample scope in 1944 to consider the Indian constitutional problem. Most of the Congress leaders and workers were languishing in jails; there was peace all around. The food situation was improving and the spectre of famine had receded. Almost a year had elapsed since Wavell took over the viceroyalty from Linlithgow. In September 1944, Gandhi and Jinnah had prolonged discussions on Pakistan, rights of self-determination for the Muslims and related issues. The Gandhi–Jinnah talks attracted a great deal of attention in India. Gandhi accepted in principle the formation of a sovereign state of Pakistan in the Muslim-majority areas in the North-West and Eastern zones. But Jinnah wanted acceptance of the Lahore resolution of 1940, based on the two-nation theory, on which the talks had failed.[5] Lord Wavell had entertained hopes that the Gandhi–Jinnah talks would not end 'on a note of complete futility'.[6] He 'expected something better' from the talks, although he did not credit either of the two leaders, 'the two great mountains', with any 'statesmanship' or capability of arriving at 'a practical solution'. He recorded in his journal: 'Jinnah had an easy task, he merely had to keep on telling Gandhi he was talking nonsense, which was true, and he did so rather rudely, without having to disclose any of the weaknesses of his own position or define his Pakistan in any way.'[7] This was an inaccurate and biased assessment of the talks. First, Jinnah's arguments showed ample inconsistencies. Second, Gandhi's suggestions had the seeds of a real breakthrough for a just and equitable settlement. Yet Jinnah was conscious of his strength in relation to British authority; at least he assumed that it was so, since he had been recognized as the sole leader of the Muslims by the government and the talks had enhanced his prestige and standing further.

Lord Wavell, therefore, thought it a propitious moment for a political move. He said so in his letter of 24 October 1944 to the Prime Minister, which initiated a dialogue with the War Cabinet about what Lord Wavell termed 'the future of India'.[8] Lord Wavell was one of the most underrated Governors-General of India. He was accused of being a man without any political instinct or experience. But he knew India better than most. He had spent his childhood there, had served in the army in India in his youth, was commander-in-chief in 1941 and supreme commander of the South-West Pacific until 1943. However, 'he was not the intellectual equal of Cripps nor was he a simple-minded soldier with narrow outlook. He was not a politician's man.'[9] His anthology of poetry, *Other Men's Flowers*, and his other writings exemplify his breadth of reading and knowledge.

Nevertheless, Lord Wavell had his shortcomings. In his letter to the Prime Minister he stated his serious misgivings regarding the efficacy or even the justification of promoting a system of governance which would lead to self-government and democracy for Indians. He told the reactionary Prime Minister Churchill: 'I agree in the main with what I think is your conviction, that in a mistaken view of Indian conditions and in entirely misplaced sentimental liberalism we took the wrong turn with India 25 or 30 years ago, but we cannot put back the clock and must deal with existing conditions and pledges; and I am clear that our present attitude is aggravating the mischief.'[10] Thus, he was not a very forward-looking Viceroy. Yet he impressed on the Prime Minister: 'We cannot hold India down by force. Indians are a docile people, and a comparatively small amount of force ruthlessly used might be sufficient: but it seems to me clear that the British people will not consent to be associated with a policy of repression, nor will world opinion approve it, nor will the British soldiers wish to stay here in large numbers after the war to hold the country down. There must be acquiescence in the British connection if we are to continue to keep India within the Commonwealth.'[11] Lord Wavell therefore asked for 'a more imaginative and constructive move', with a view to securing India as a friendly partner in the British Commonwealth 'so that our predominant influence in these [neighbouring] countries will, I think, be assured; with a lost and hostile India, we are likely to be reduced in the East to the position of commercial bag-men'.[12] There was an overwhelming body of opinion in India, he said, for 'a change of spirit'. In order to remove the deep-rooted suspicion of the Indian educated classes and important political elements against British rule, he suggested opening a dialogue with the leaders of the two dominant political parties and others as early as possible. He added: 'I think the failure of Gandhi–Jinnah talks has created a favourable moment for a move by His Majesty's Government.'[13] Wavell's considered opinion expressed forcefully did influence the British Cabinet. In March 1945 the Viceroy and his team were in London for discussions which led to the convening of the Simla Conference in June 1945.

The aim of the conference was to make proposals for the composition of an interim government in India. It was intended to form a new Executive Council, which would represent the dominant political opinion in the country and important communities represented by 'caste Hindus' and Muslims in equal proportion. Except for the Viceroy and the commander-in-chief all members of the council were to be Indians: 'Even the External Affairs Department would be in charge of an Indian Member of the council so far as the interest of British India was concerned.' Lord Wavell made it clear that the formation of the interim government would not prejudice the final constitutional settlement. It was hoped that, after the conference, popular provincial governments would be formed in the provinces. The conference would also consider the appropriate time for fresh elections.

The British Cabinet had given its consent to the conference of 21 leaders representing a broad spectrum of Indian political opinion and begining its first session on 25 June 1945 at Simla. The Simla Conference ended on 14 July 1945.

Gandhi was invited to the conference in a personal capacity. While accepting the invitation he objected to the expression 'caste Hindus', which was offensive according to him. Lord Wavell explained that the term 'caste Hindus' was used to distinguish them from the Depressed Classes. A second reservation of Gandhi concerned the question of independence. Neither the Viceroy's broadcast of 14 June, nor the statement of the Secretary of State for India made in Parliament, referred to Indian independence. Lord Wavell explained that the terms of reference could not be changed, but it was understood that soon rather than later independence would come to India.[14] Jinnah also sought clarifications but Lord Wavell staved them off by saying that clarifications could be sought and questions raised at the conference itself.

As Jinnah said at the beginning of the conference, the proposals 'in no way affected the Congress stand for independence, or the Muslim League stand for Pakistan'.[15] The conference, however, foundered on the issue of the League's claim to be the sole representative of Muslims with the right to nominate Muslims to the Executive Council. To this neither Lord Wavell nor the Congress would agree. Lord Wavell felt it was the Viceroy's prerogative to select men for the council, and the Congress felt as a national party it could suggest a panel of names comprising Muslims, Hindus, Parsis, Christians and others.

It was asserted by Jinnah that his demand was based on the memorandum of 1 July 1940. According to the memorandum, 'Non-official advisers should be appointed, number to be fixed after further discussion and the majority of the non-official advisers should be the representatives of Musalmans; and where the Provinces can be run by combination of parties or coalition, naturally, it would be for the parties concerned to adjust matters by agreement among themselves.'[16] Jinnah claimed that the privilege to nominate Muslims was agreed upon by Lord Wavell. But the Wavell government thought that matter had no constituitional validity. Jinnah declared further: 'The Muslim League could not agree to any constitution except on the fundamental principle of Pakistan. The Congress took an opposite view and wanted a United India with a Central Legislature responsible to the majority in a Central Assembly. On their past pronouncements the Muslim League could be justified in saying that Pakistan must be conceded before they could cooperate at all.'[17] Both were contentious issues.

By 29 June 1945 it was obvious that the Congress could not agree to the Muslim League's demand that Jinnah as the President of Muslim League had the sole authority to nominate the Muslim members in the council. The Congress included in the list two Muslims out of five members to

represent the Congress in the Executive Council. Maulana Azad tried to impress Jinnah that it was a great advantage to the Muslims that there would be seven Muslim members in the council but Jinnah would not budge from his stand that he alone would nominate Muslim members and that the Congress could nominate only Hindus. On 7 July 1945, Jinnah again insisted that Lord Linlithgow had agreed to the Muslim League point of view as follows: '. . . in the light of our discussion, I am content that the selection of representatives while resting with the Governor-General should be based in the case of the Muslim League . . . on confidential discussion between the leader of the Party and myself'.[18] Jinnah stated: 'This alternative was acceptable to the Muslim League. The Working Committee is of the opinion that procedure settled on the previous occasion should be followed in the present case, so far as the Muslim League is concerned. Further the Working Committee is emphatically of the opinion that all the Muslim members should be chosen from the Muslim League subject to a confidential discussion between Your Excellency and the President of the All India Muslim League before they are finally recommended by you to the Crown for appointment.'[19] Again it was pointed out that Jinnah's claim could not be binding since the government of India had not accepted the principle.

However, Jinnah continued in his letter of 7 July 1945 other points raised by the working committee, 'particularly the question of providing an effective safeguard against unfair decisions of the majority'.[20]

On 8 July 1945, Jinnah met the Viceroy and asked for a written guarantee to the Muslim League that the Muslim members would be selected exclusively from his list. On 9 July, Jinnah refused to submit a list of names unless such a guarantee was given; this was 'fundamental' to further discussion. On 11 July, Lord Wavell showed the list of nominations drawn by him. Jinnah at once pointed out that it was impossible for the Muslim League to cooperate unless (a) all the Muslim members of the Council were taken from the League and (b) the Governor-General's power of veto were reinforced by a special safeguard for the Muslims within the council, for example provision that no decision objected to by the Muslims should be taken except by a clear two-thirds majority, or something of that kind.[21]

The Viceroy said he could not accept either of the conditions. Jinnah replied, if that were so, the Muslim League could not cooperate. The Viceroy said that meant the failure of the conference. On 11 July 1945 the Viceroy called Gandhi and told him that 'in view of the unwillingness of the Muslim League to come in except on their own terms, the conference has failed'.[22]

The Simla Conference ended on 14 July 1945. Jinnah used the opportunity to assert that 'the League and the Congress had an entirely different angle of vision. If the proposed Executive Council had come into being every matter before it would have been looked at by the League and the

Congress from an entirely different point of view. The idea of Pakistan and the ideal of United India were incompatible. The League had repeatedly offered cooperation in the war effort and had raised no difficulties or obstacles. But the League was determined to have Pakistan.'[23]

Jinnah continued with his address: 'The League would consider any proposal for an interim government subject to two conditions. First, a declaration by His Majesty's government giving the Muslims the right of self-determination and secondly, the grant to the Muslims of an equality with all other communities in the interim government... The first of their conditions found no place in the present proposals... was obliquely referred to in the Parliament, but that is not good enough for an interim arrangement might well become permanent.' He also expressed his oft-repeated fear: 'the Congress might make use of any interim arrangement to consolidate its position and gradually to strangle Pakistan'.[24]

It has been observed by Jinnah's biographers and supporters that Jinnah did not want Pakistan nor was he angling for partition; it was merely a bargaining exercise and it was Congress's attitude of a point-of-no-return policy that drove him to ask for Pakistan. None of the discussions or his speeches after 1943 give any indication of his ambivalence in respect of the demand for Pakistan. All statements were prefaced and ended with the single idea: the acceptance of Pakistan first, discussion later. Furthermore, at each stage a new demand surfaced.

On 15 July 1945, Lord Wavell, in his note to the Secretary of State for India,[25] observed: 'Jinnah is narrow and arrogant, and is actuated mainly by fear and distrust of the Congress. Like Gandhi he is constitutionally incapable of friendly cooperation with other party.'

He went on to emphasize: 'The failure of any political move narrows the field for future negotiations and now that Jinnah has rejected a move with the present constitution based on parity between the caste Hindus and Muslims it is not clear what he would be prepared to accept short of Pakistan... The recent proposals were rejected not on the merits but as soon as the discussion reached a point at which the Muslims felt obliged to raise a communal principle.' When Gandhi was informed of the failure of the conference, he commented that the British government 'would have to decide sooner or later whether to come down on the side of the Congress or League, since they could never reconcile them. A discouraging comment but true under present leadership.'[26]

It was argued that by submitting to Jinnah's rejection of the Wavell plan, the government had given a right of veto to the Muslim league. Maulana Azad said that the British government should have foreseen the communal difficulties and been prepared to meet them. If the conference was convened only to get Jinnah to agree, failing which it would have to disperse, the Congress would have told Lord Wavell that it would be a waste of energy to convene a conference, opined C. Rajagopalachari. It was also suggested

that the government should have gone ahead with its plan to form the government with Congress support.

Why did Jinnah become obdurate while the negotiations were proceeding? It appears he was deeply disturbed because most of the Muslim leaders, including those of the Muslim League, wanted to accept Congress's proposal: if Jinnah had agreed to two Muslims out of its panel of five, as suggested by the Congress, there would have been seven Muslims in the Executive Council to take care of Muslim interests. On 9 July 1945, Lord Wavell recorded in his journal that Jinnah had met him on that day. He found Jinnah 'in a high state of nervous tension and said to me more than once: "I am at the end of my tether." He also said: "I ask you not to wreck the League." He is obviously in great difficulties, but they are largely of his own making by his arrogance and intransigence. He fears now to be made the scapegoat for the failure of the conference; and yet will not give up anything of his claim to represent all Muslims.'[27]

Another insider's view was presented by V.P. Menon. Jinnah seems to have recovered from his 'nervous tension' before the conference ended. In his book, *The Transfer of Power in India*, Menon writes that Hossain Imam, Muslim League member of the Council of State, told him that a member of the Executive Council was advising Jinnah 'to remain firm'.[28] Also significant is Durga Das's account about Jinnah soon after his press conference: 'I asked Jinnah: "Why did you spurn the Wavell plan when you had won the point of parity for the League with Congress?"... His reply stunned me for a moment: "Am I a fool to accept this when I am offered Pakistan on a platter?"'[29] Durga Das's information is corroborated by Menon's: someone from the Executive Council or from the Cabinet was in touch with Jinnah. Whether the offer of Pakistan was made by an important person in the British Cabinet is not clear, but it was feasible and it may have been so. According to Menon, it was Sir Francis Mudie, the Home Member of the Viceroy's Council, who was in touch with Jinnah. Sir Francis Mudie was known for his pro-Muslim sympathies. He was appointed Governor of the Punjab by Jinnah when he became the Governor-General of Pakistan.

Reverting back to the question of constitutional advance, it appears almost certain, as stated by Lord Wavell in his communication to the Secretary of State for India on 15 July 1945, that Jinnah was likely to be satisfied only by the grant of Pakistan. A couple of months after the failure of the Simla Conference, when the Viceroy in his broadcast of 19 September 1945 talked of fresh elections and of the task of making a new constitution for India, Jinnah issued a statement in *Dawn* of 21 September 1945: 'But one thing is clear, that no attempt will succeed except on the basis of Pakistan and that is the major issue to be decided by all those who are well-wishers of India and who are really in earnest to achieve real freedom and independence of India and the sooner it is fully realized the better.' Jinnah concluded his statement: 'The division of India is the only solution of this

most complex constitutional problem of India and this is the road to happiness, prosperity, welfare and freedom of 400 millions inhabiting the subcontinent.'[30]

The political scenario and the Cabinet mission, 1946

On 8 May 1945, Germany surrendered and the war was over in the Western Hemisphere. Only Japan held on in the Pacific but it was bound to be defeated sooner than later. While the victory was hailed all over the world, 'the enslaved India', as the nationalist forces called it, did not revel or show any enthusiasm. The chief secretary of the government of the United Provinces reported to the centre: 'while Muslims gladly undertook to arrange thanksgiving prayers, not one Hindu temple agreed to organize thanksgiving in any appropriate scale'.[31] It was obvious that the British attitude of friendliness towards the Muslim League and Jinnah was responsible for the Muslim victory celebrations. On the other hand, the government hated the Indian National Congress and despised its leaders. It looked down upon the Congress Party as a Hindu party. Lord Linlithgow confessed to K.M. Munshi, in one of his revealing moments, that the British thought Hindus, as a community, were opposed to British rule in India.[32] It was indeed true to a great extent. It was Hindus who ran the government of the country on behalf of the British and again it was they who toppled the alien government in India. It was also generally believed that Winston Churchill favoured Muslims at the expense of Hindus, and his anti-Hindu stance was considered abominable.[33] Even Lord Wavell, who claimed to be impartial and non-partisan in Indian politics, was in favour of Muslims. He expressed his inner feelings in his journal while negotiating with them during the Cabinet mission: 'I sympathize with the Muslims rather than with the Congress, and I am convinced that our document is quite fair to them.'[34] On 9 May 1946, when Jinnah had again insisted on parity between the Muslim League and the Congress, Lord Wavell recorded: 'Tiresome of J. [Jinnah] but Congress have been very provocative in bringing up here two Muslims out of four when they are almost entirely a Hindu organisation.'[35] The two who were in the Congress delegation were Maulana Azad and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. To brand the Congress as a Hindu organization was an exaggerated view. The majority of Congress were no doubt Hindus, yet it was the most important national political organization representing all-India interests in India. The Congress always considered it an offensive and hostile observation. Similarly, after visiting some of the Hindu temples and shrines in company with the Maharaja Scindia of Gwalior, Lord Wavell recorded in his journal: 'The immense gulf between the Hindu religion and mentality and ours and the Moslems is the real core of all our troubles in India and this visit in a way brought it home to me.'[36] It was strange indeed of Lord Wavell to have bracketed himself with

Muslims. In his opinion the religious divide between the Muslims and Hindus was real.

In addition to British antipathy towards Hindus in general, racial and colour prejudices were often displayed in India. Somerset Maugham wrote about racialism and 'crass' colour prejudice on the part of the British in India.[37] It was not only the social distance, so meticulously maintained, which separated the British from Indians but it was what he called 'the same arrogant and hidebound colonialism – little short of outrageous'[38] which was responsible for the legacy of hatred left behind. He observed with profound regret that 'they [the British ruling class in India] humiliated them and so earned their hatred'.[39]

In this dreary discourse on ruling-class behaviour in India, however, there were exceptions. Attlee recalled that he had met Jinnah way back in 1927: 'When I knew him he was a hanger-on of the Congress far from being a good Muslim... He was extremely westernised, rather dandyish and thought a great deal of his ambition.' Attlee continued: 'I don't think he was very genuine you know.' Besides, 'He destroyed the most promising joint government there was in Punjab, surrounded by very big men like Sikander Hyat Khan, who had Sikhs and Hindus and Muslims all working well together. Jinnah set himself out to wreck that.'[40] Attlee praised some of the leaders of the Congress, including Gandhi, for their liberal outlook, radicalism in socio-economic reforms and honesty of purpose; and, most important, they were easy to get on with.

The general election results showed a landslide victory for Labour in Britain. The Conservative Party was humbled. Winston Churchill recalled 'how in one day in 1940 he had been elevated to PM when the enemy was at the gates, and in one day in 1945 when the war was over he had been thrown out'.[41] On being called by the Attlee government, Lord Wavell left for London on 24 August 1945. At the India Committee meeting on 29 August, Lord Wavell suggested: 'we must clear the Pakistan issue before we could go any further'.[42] But 'they were examining the Cripps offer and thinking of a Constitution-Making Body'. Wavell was opposed to installing a constitution-making body, since it would appear to be imposed on India without consultations with Indians. Wavell noted that Birla and Shiva Rao were often conferring with Cripps and Attlee at that time.[43] Attlee was not for Pakistan as yet. Durga Das was correct when he wrote: 'Attlee did not conceal his deep agitation over the Muslim demand for Pakistan and agreed with my plea that a minority should not be allowed to hold up the progress of the majority to self rule.'[44] Finally, it was announced on 19 September 1945 by Wavell in India, and Attlee in London, that it was the intention of the Attlee government to transfer power for full self-government in India. For this purpose, a constitution-making body would be convened (after the elections, which were to be held in the winter months) 'to ascertain whether the proposals in the 1942 declaration are

acceptable or whether some alternative or modified scheme is preferable'. Besides, 'a treaty will require to be concluded between Great Britain and India'; the British government was proceeding to give its fullest consideration to the content of the treaty. Meanwhile the Executive Council of the Governor-General was to be Indianized, which should have the support of the main political parties. The aim of the government was to allow India 'to play her full part in working out the new world order'.[45]

In India, however, the problems persisted. The British official class was opposed to Gandhi and the Congress. Governor Hallett of UP impressed on Wavell that 'Gandhi's policy is entirely anti-British and is directed by no other motive. I therefore welcome Jinnah's frontal attack and I am very glad that Mudie has agreed with me on necessity of getting full publicity for that at home; I gather that, as usual, *Reuters* had emasculated the speed.'[46] Everybody among the ruling classes felt convinced that the 'Communal issue depends on Jinnah's attitude . . . The Congress is attacking the government and I see little hope of any solution to the deadlock. I trust Your Excellency will not enter into negotiations.'[47] Wavell was fully armed with the considered view of many of his governors who thought Gandhi was a menace to law and order in India. As for Winston Churchill's directive that 'only over his dead body would any approach to Gandhi take place. I resented this . . .', Wavell said. Earlier on 7 October 1943 at the Cabinet meeting, Eden had also spoken 'as if I was proposing to enthrone Gandhi'.[48] However, Wavell also 'wholly mistrusted Gandhi' and considered him to be 'at heart an implacable enemy of Great Britain and who would take advantage of every concession and be encouraged to ask for more'.[49]

After the failure of the Simla Conference two significant developments took place in India which raised the political temper of the country considerably. In November 1945, Indian National Army (INA) trials began in Red Fort for the first batch of three officers, one of whom was a Hindu, the second a Muslim and the third a Sikh. By one stroke the government united the people of India. The Congress took advantage of this opportunity to arouse popular feelings for a national cause. Jawaharlal Nehru donned barrister's robes for the first time to advocate on behalf of the INA. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Bhulabhai Desai were other prominent defence lawyers.

The INA, comprising about 20,000 men of the Indian army who had surrendered to the Japanese after the fall of Malaya and Burma, was led by the dynamic leader Subhas Chandra Bose. He had galvanized this force into a combat unit in 1943 with the avowed object of liberating India from British rule. They marched towards north-east India through the Burmese border. Most of them, however, were captured by the British forces. The trials made the INA personnel national heroes, and the Congress, by supporting them, benefited in the elections which were held in the country

first for the Central Legislature and soon after for the provincial legislative assemblies. The election brought the two parties face to face.

The mutiny of naval ratings of the Royal Indian Navy in February 1946 in Bombay electrified the atmosphere further. The Indian sailors, complaining of low pay, bad food and racial discrimination, hoisted the Congress flag on the signals training ship *Talwar* and went on hunger strike shouting '*Jai Hind*' (Hail India!), the national slogan of Subhas Chandra Bose's INA. The strike spread over to the coast, numerous mill workers supporting the naval mutiny. Two army battalions were employed to restore order. The casualties were 228 killed and 1,048 injured. These incidents made an impact on the government: it felt the loyalty of the army could not be taken for granted.

During these events the Congress began mobilizing the people in the country, making anti-government speeches and asking the people to be ready for, in Nehru's words 'a revolution'. The tone of other leaders, like Sardar Patel, was equally sharp. Lord Wavell asked his governors 'to impress on everyone that to appease the Congress at the expense of loyalists was not his policy'.[50] On 3 November 1945, Jawaharlal Nehru was warned by Lord Wavell that 'any incitement to violence' will not be tolerated by the government. He was worried all the same: 'We will before long be faced with the issue of another violent suppression of Congress, with weaker and rather demoralized forces perhaps, if an intimidation of officials and police continues unchecked and they succeed in dividing the IA [Indian Army] over the INA trials or of capitulation of them.'[51] On the issue of communalism, Nehru told Wavell in no uncertain terms: 'that Congress could make no terms whatever with the Muslim League under its present leadership and policy, that it was a reactionary body and [Pakistan was an] entirely unacceptable idea with which there could be no settlement.'[52]

Deeply concerned as he was with these developments Lord Wavell sent two notes, on 6 November 1945 and 27 December 1945, to the Attlee Cabinet giving his view of the political situation.[53] The first stated that he feared a general Congress uprising 'for the expulsion of the British', that the Congress demanded 'grant of immediate independence to India under a government selected by the Congress High Command... I assume therefore that there would be no question of the acceptance of a Congress ultimatum.' He said 'we can't yield to force or threat of force; nor can we lightly divest ourselves of our obligations to the minorities'. He asked for the permission to be 'prepared to suppress the movement and to suppress it with great thoroughness... the party is not yet fully reorganized and its immediate suppression would be relatively easy'. The second note was meant to be 'a political appreciation for the Cabinet and a programme for political action'.[54] He suggested that an initiative for constitutional advance should be made. As far as the Attlee Cabinet was concerned it was not clear whether the alarmist view of Lord Wavell carried much weight, except

that it underlined Wavell's disenchantment with and hostility towards the Congress.

Meanwhile, the election results had been announced. The Congress secured more than 91 per cent of the votes cast in the general constituencies whereas the Muslim League secured 86 per cent of the Muslim votes cast in the Mohammadan constituencies. The position in the Central Legislature clearly showed the dominance of the Congress as far as non-Muslim areas were concerned. The Muslim League secured victory in all Muslim seats. The Nationalist Muslims who fought in many places were totally vanquished. In the Central Assembly, Congress won 57 seats, and the Muslim League 30 out of a total of 102 seats. The results of the provincial assembly elections registered the same trend. The Congress swept the polls in Bombay, Madras, UP, Bihar, Central Provinces and Orissa, and formed ministries. The Muslim League was invited to join the Congress governments of three provinces as coalition partners but it refused.

The position of the Muslim League was not very reassuring in the Muslim-majority provinces, although it emerged as the single largest party winning maximum seats. For instance, in the Bengal assembly of 250 members, the Muslim League won 113 of the total 119 Muslim seats, Congress bagging 87. The Muslim League formed the government with the support of independents and Europeans. In Sind, the Muslim League won 27 seats and the Congress 21: the rest were divided among the Nationalist Muslims, three; G.M. Syed group, four; European, three; and Independent Labour, one. G.M. Syed was able to muster a non-Muslim League majority but the Governor asked the Muslim League leader to form the government. In the North-West Frontier Province, Congress bagged 30 seats against the Muslim League's 17. The Congress formed the ministry under Dr Khan Sahib.

In the Punjab, the Muslim League scored victory in 75 of 86 Muslim seats; the Congress securing 51 seats; Akalis, 22 and the Unionists, 20, while the remaining seven went to the Independents. A coalition government was formed with Khizr Hyat Khan as premier supported by the Congress and the Sikhs. The Congress was prepared to have an alliance with the Muslim League provided the latter gave up the call of Pakistan during its office in government with the Congress, since it was 'an extra-provincial question'. The League refused and therefore the Unionist leadership formed the government with Congress support. In Assam, the Congress formed the government although the Muslim seats were won by the Muslim League. The Congress still had the majority in the legislative assembly.

These developments showed a most unsatisfactory state of affairs as far as the Muslim League's position was concerned. In spite of the fact that it had won almost all Muslim seats in the provinces, it could not form a government in any Muslim-majority province. There was no question of

its coming into power as far as the rest of the provinces were concerned. The victory of the Muslim League, therefore, was far from complete. The Muslim votes were cast on the issue of Pakistan, and the slogan of 'Islam in danger' had rent the air in most provinces, yet the Muslim League could not hope to form the government. It was not a comforting thought for Jinnah. He had to do something more drastic to gain Pakistan for Muslims.

On 10 April 1946, Jinnah called a convention of Muslim members of the provincial legislatures in Delhi. More than 400 members attended the convention, with thousands of supporters waiting to hear them. The members asked for acceptance of Pakistan in the Muslim-majority areas, the denial of which would result in a blood bath in the country. The name of Halaku the Mongol, known in history for perpetrating blood-curdling cruelties on innocent people, was freely invoked to attain independent Pakistan. They warned both the government and the Congress of the dire consequences if Pakistan was denied them. The swords of 90 million Muslims would succeed in getting them their long-cherished and promised Muslim homeland.[55]

Lord Wavell did not admonish the Muslim League or Jinnah for openly inciting people to violence. On 9 April 1946, 'the old humbug' Gandhi had met Lord Wavell regarding removal of the salt tax and the INA trials. Lord Wavell said: 'when we parted I gave him a warning that the threat of mass movement by the Congress was a dangerous weapon, there were still a great many thousand British soldiers in India who did not subscribe to his doctrine of non-violence and might be very violent if British lives or property suffered'.[56] On 10 April, Jinnah's Muslim League openly declared that the population of India would be put to the sword if Pakistan was not granted, but no action was taken against it; no warning was issued to Jinnah when he met Viceroy Wavell on 16 April. The Congress and Gandhi had to be warned against a non-violent mass movement, but not Jinnah or his Muslim League, even if they incited their coreligionists to mass violence. Earlier, on 3 November 1945, Nehru had also been given a warning. This was the kind of double-speak even the honest Viceroy Lord Wavell indulged in. The time chosen for such an outburst of blood-curdling oratory by Muslim League leaders was indeed significant. The Cabinet mission was in India under the leadership of the Secretary of State for India, Lord Pethick-Lawrence, to discuss with the leaders of Indian opinion matters relating to constitution-making and the formation of interim government in India.

Lord Wavell met Winston Churchill in London in August 1945 after the Conservative Party had lost in the general elections. 'He was friendly and in good form, is just off on a holiday to Italy . . . He gave forth his usual jeremiad about India; warned me that the anchor (himself) was now gone and that I was on the lee shore with rash pilots; revealed that the only

reason he had agreed to my political move was that the India Committee had all told me it was bound to fail!... His final remark as I closed the door of lift was: "Keep a bit of India." '[57] But the new Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, true to his earlier promises, was determined to part with India in friendship and invite it to join the British Commonwealth of Nations as an equal partner. He was not interested in keeping 'a bit of India'. In early January 1946, a parliamentary delegation was sent by him to India to meet the most important political leaders of India and to suggest ways and means to solve the political problem of India. The delegation spent nearly a month in India. Jinnah reiterated his stand – unless Pakistan was accepted in principle and granted 'parity' with other parties first, he would not enter into discussion for any interim government. Nehru conceded Pakistan but insisted on a plebiscite in the border districts to confirm it. The delegation was impressed that Nehru stated the Congress case for freedom 'without rancour or bitterness, and in a clear yet firm way... He was tolerant in his views and as broad in his outlook as I had expected him to be. Tonight, I feel, I really met a great man,' said Muriel Nichol, one of the Labour members of the delegation.[58] Woodrow Wyatt, also a Labour MP, was a member who was credited with telling Attlee on his return that, first, a Cabinet delegation should be sent to India immediately to formulate a definite plan for the transfer of power and, second and more important, there must be a time-frame within which the transfer of power should take place. He claims to have suggested one year at the maximum after the Cabinet mission proposals were made to the political parties.[59] Attlee made an announcement in the House of Commons on 15 March 1946 that the Cabinet mission would be visiting India 'with the intention of using their utmost endeavours to help her to attain her freedom as speedily and fully as possible'.[60] Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Secretary of State for India, Sir Stafford Cripps, President of the Board of Trade, and Mr A.V. Alexander, First Lord of the Admiralty, formed the Cabinet mission with Lord Pethick-Lawrence as its leader. Arriving in Delhi on 24 March 1946, the mission conferred with Indian leaders for about three months.

The Cabinet mission's primary task was to bring the two major political parties of India, the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League, to an agreement regarding the framing of a new constitution through a constitution-making body. While the process of framing the constitution continued, it was considered necessary to form an interim government constituted of the best political opinion in the country, in which the major roles of the Congress and the League were envisaged. Prolonged discussions took place among the protagonists about the formation of the interim government and about the issue of whether India should be partitioned or whether a union of India comprising British India and the states should be formed. There were discussions about central and provincial responsibilities; residuary powers were to be assigned to the provinces and

the questions relating to communal issues were to be voted upon by the two major communities, voting through their representatives in the legislature. On all these issues there was considerable exchange of opinion but the Muslim League leadership remained irreconcilable with regard to the partition of India. The British government had declared that it was determined to give complete independence to India. Jinnah asked, as he had often done, to whom would the British government transfer power, when the two major segments of India – Hindus and Muslims – remained separate and distinct entities. That became the basic issue for Jinnah and he insisted that nothing but partition of India, giving the Muslim-majority areas in the North-West and Eastern zones a right to form an independent and separate state.

Apart from the main demand of Pakistan by the Muslim League every single issue was debated regarding the formation of an interim government and the principles and procedures to be adopted for the composition and powers of the constitution-making body to formulate the constitution for India. However, differences between the two major parties appeared to the Cabinet mission to be irreconcilable. The problem was further complicated by the fact that the Cabinet mission essentially was for a union of India and was reluctant to accept the idea of partition straightaway. Yet Lord Wavell was as much a supporter of the Muslim League as his predecessor Lord Linlithgow. Lord Pethick-Lawrence and Sir Stafford Cripps were certainly closer to the viewpoint of the Congress, but Lord Wavell thought they were 'appeasing the Congress'.

On 8 April 1946, Lord Wavell recorded: 'I raised the general question of the continuous appeasement of Congress.' On another occasion he said that he was 'frankly shocked at the deference shown to Gandhi by Cripps and S. of S. . . . The second round of these discussions with the leaders of the Congress and Muslim League was equally fruitless; and to my military mind equally mishandled owing to a lack of a definite plan.'[61] Lord Wavell's difficulty did not end with what he termed the lack of a definite plan. In terms of his breakdown plan the political dialogue between these leaders appeared to him to be meaningless and he continued to dismiss the discussions initiated and undertaken by the mission. Wavell's tragedy was that he seemed so righteous in his attitude that he criticized and condemned almost everybody except Jinnah.

Lord Wavell recorded: 'Gandhi was true to form and was the real wrecker. His one idea for 40 years has been to overthrow British rule and influence and to establish a Hindu raj, and he is as unscrupulous as he is persistent. He has brought to a fine art the technique of vagueness and of never making a statement which is not somehow so qualified or worded, that he cannot be pinned down to anything definite. His practice of mixing prayers with politics or rather making prayers a medium of political propaganda is all a part of the make up. He is an exceedingly shrewd, obstinate,

domineering, double-tongued single-minded politician, and there is little true saintliness in him.'[62] With such a mindset could the Viceroy be impartial and do business with an open mind?

Even the personnel of the mission were not spared: 'The S. of S. old P.L. is a sentimental pacifist with a strain of rather pugnacious obstinacy if crossed and I think a good deal of self satisfaction and some vanity . . . The approach of the S. of S. to these tough Hindu politicians was often too abject, I thought but he undoubtedly convinced them of his genuineness and honesty of purpose.'[63] Cripps was of course 'the ablest of the party' but he did not 'quite trust him'[64] and as 'my predecessor told me with reference to Cripps Mission of 1942 was not quite straight under pressure and he was right'.[65] Lord Wavell had a good word for A.V. Alexander: 'he sat back, since he knew nothing of India and the ways of Indian politicians' yet 'he was straight sensible and honest the very best type of British Labour, the best we breed'.[66] About Jinnah, he recorded: 'Jinnah is a mass of vanity and no statesman' and at the same time 'over called his hand in the end, and was too uncompromising on the non-League Muslim issue; but he is straight as compared with Congress, and does not constantly shift his ground as they do, though he too drives a hard bargain'.[67]

The Cabinet mission's tortuous but well-meant negotiations continued for nearly three months without reaching a consensus. Finally, on 16 May 1946, it issued the statement, fully supported by Lord Wavell, which enunciated the government policy in relation to transfer of power to Indian hands.[68] Before taking a final step in this regard, the mission underlined the necessity of reaching agreement on 'the issue of the unity or division of India'. The mission believed there was overwhelming evidence to show that there was 'an almost universal desire, outside the supporters of the Muslim League, for the unity of India'.[69] The Congress, the Sikhs, the Depressed Classes, other political elements and the large sections of Indian states were in favour of maintaining the unity and integrity of India. At the same time the mission felt that there was 'very genuine and acute anxiety of the Muslims lest they should find themselves subjected to a perpetual Hindu-majority rule'. Hence, 'the question of a separate and fully independent sovereign state of Pakistan as claimed by the Muslim League' was examined.[70]

Keeping in view the substantial minority populations in the Muslim-majority provinces, the mission observed that the mere 'setting up of a separate sovereign state of Pakistan on the lines claimed by the Muslim League', would not solve the communal problem, since there was no 'justification for including within a sovereign Pakistan those districts of the Punjab or Bengal and Assam in which the population is predominantly non-Muslim'.[71] The mission also clearly stated: 'Every argument that can be used in favour of Pakistan can equally in our view be used in favour of the exclusion of the non-Muslim areas from Pakistan.' It was clear that if Pakistan had to be

created it would inevitably involve the partition of the Punjab and of Bengal as well, which Jinnah was opposed to. The Sikhs in the Punjab were specifically mentioned along with the substantial Hindu population of the Punjab who could not be left unprotected. The mission therefore came to the conclusion that 'neither a larger nor a smaller sovereign state of Pakistan would provide an acceptable solution for the communal problem'.[72] Besides, on both sides of the border there were mixed populations which could not be suitably extricated or protected. Against the proposition of Pakistan, the mission felt there were 'weighty administrative, economic and military considerations'. It further noted that there were Indian states which would find great difficulty 'in associating themselves with a divided British India'.[73] Also the two wings of the proposed Pakistan state were separated from each other by 700 miles and 'the communication between them both in war and peace would be dependent on the goodwill of Hindustan'.[74]

The Congress had suggested that the Muslim provinces could have full autonomy subject to a minimum of central responsibilities for foreign affairs, defence and communications. But the Muslim League did not agree. It was argued that such an arrangement in which other provinces were not allowed the same degree of autonomy was unacceptable. Under the circumstances, the mission suggested an all-India constitution:

1. There should be a union of India, embracing both British India and the states, which would deal with foreign affairs, defence and communication and with financial powers to meet these responsibilities.
2. The union should have an executive and legislature representing both British India and the states. Any question of a communal nature 'should require for its decision a majority of the representatives present and voting of the two major communities in the legislature as well as the majority of all the members present and voting'.
3. 'All subjects other than the union subjects and all residuary powers should vest in the provinces.'
4. Similarly the states also had the power to administer those responsibilities outside the union portfolios.
5. Provinces had the freedom to form groups and to elect their own executives and legislatures.
6. The constitution of the union and the group could be reviewed after every ten years if the majority in the legislative assemblies demanded it.[75]
7. Under this broad framework a constitution-making body was to be formed to draw up a constitution. The mission indicated the composition of the constitution-making machinery, with a view to making it as broad based and accurate a representative body as possible.
8. Until the constitution was framed by the constitution-making body, it was decided to set up an interim government having the support of the major political parties.

The document prepared by the mission was of great significance on another account. It relied on the break-up of minority populations in the Muslim-majority provinces, based on the census carried out in 1941, and kept in view the interests of both the majority and minority communities as far as possible. The states were also represented and were to be treated as separate provinces. The proposals had obvious weaknesses. The Congress would not allow the states a separate existence, while the Muslim League demanded two constitution-making bodies instead of one. Essentially the interim government was to be a coalition government represented equally by the Congress and the Muslim League and other elements. In the 14-member Executive Council it was proposed to have the proportion of the parties and communities as 5 + 5 + 3: five from the Congress, five from the Muslim League, one from the Depressed Classes, one Sikh and one other caste. On 16 June 1946, the proportion agreed was 5 + 5 + 4.

The Muslim League agreed to the Cabinet mission plan, accepting a union centre for ten years dealing with the three subjects of foreign affairs, defence and communications, and also the concept of grouping the Muslim-majority provinces for the purpose of framing their provincial and group constitutions 'unfettered by the Union in any way'.

In effect the 16 May statement of the Cabinet mission rejected the concept of two separate and fully independent sovereign states of Pakistan and India. It also rejected the smaller sovereign state of Pakistan which involved a division of the Punjab, Bengal and Assam. Instead it offered a union of India with a centre with powers to deal with foreign affairs, defence and communication. Other responsibilities were regarded as provincial ones to be undertaken by the provinces. The residuary portfolios were also assigned to the provinces, thus envisaging a weak centre on the one hand and by allowing the provinces to form their own groups who would elect their own executives and legislatures, the centre was weakened further on the other hand. This gave the opportunity to the Muslim-majority provinces to form a group of their own with full legislative and executive powers. Besides, after every ten years, if the majority in the Legislative Assembly demanded the regrouping of provinces, this could be reviewed. Indian states were also allowed to form groups and, like the provinces, had the power to administer portfolios which were outside the domain of the centre.

The Cabinet mission plan, although well-intentioned, was complex and not easy to work with. The three-tier system, as it was called, had so much flexibility that the union would remain in a constant state of flux for most of the time. The Muslim League accepted the plan after discussions and when assurance was given that the Muslim-majority provinces could form a group and would have the power to secede from the union. The Congress felt that the plan envisaged not one partition but several partitions after a few years, although the Cabinet mission opposed the principle of

partition. According to the Congress this was a contradiction in terms. Later, clause 19 of the May 16 statement was the subject of disagreement between the Congress and the Cabinet mission. The Muslim League interpreted the provisions to mean grouping of Muslim-majority provinces for the 'purpose of framing their provincial and group constitution unfettered by the Union in any way'. Subsequent observations and clarifications by the Cabinet mission sought to confirm the Muslim League point of view, to which the Congress did not agree. The crux of the issue lay on the question of partition and it was felt that the Cabinet mission plan would eventually lead to a partition of India in bits and pieces without resolving the communal question. The problem still remained in respect of the protection of minorities both in the union of India and in the Muslim-majority provinces, and no solution appeared to be at hand.

The three-tier system was also opposed by the Congress on the ground that it was wrong to form groups of provinces on a religious or communal basis and thereby weaken the centre. The Congress never accepted the two-nation theory, making clear its basic reservation about the Mission's plan. Apart from its objection to the main proposition, there were differences regarding the interpretation of clause 19 (v) of the 16 May statement, which related to the formation of the constitution-making body and to regrouping the provinces. Another contentious problem was the composition and formation of the interim government.

Clause 19 of the statement dealt mainly with the question of how the constitution-making body was to be constituted. The mission, of course, wanted 'a broad based and accurate representation of the whole population'; it argued that 'the most satisfactory method obviously' was by election based on adult franchise, but this was not possible, since this 'would lead to wholly unacceptable delay to the formation of the new constitution'. Hence, the best possible alternative in its view was 'to utilise the recently elected provincial Legislative Assemblies as the electing bodies'. Recognizing that there were several anomalies in the application of the concept of weightage and that the numerical strength of the provincial legislative assemblies did not bear the same proportion to the total population in each province, the mission wished to correct them. It thought the fairest and more practical plan would be to:

(a) allot to each province a total number of seats proportional to its population roughly to a ratio of one to a million as nearest substitute for representation by adult franchise;
(b) divide the provincial allocation of seats between the main communities in each province in proportion to their population;
(c) provide that the representatives allotted to each community in a province shall be elected by the members of that community in its legislative assembly.

Thus, the basis of election was to be by a rough system of communal representation tempered by proportional representation. This again was contested and objected to by the Congress, though in the context of the Muslim League demand for a separate homeland for Muslims this was considered a lesser evil. However, Gandhi thought this worse than the Pakistan demand.

Three main communities were recognized for the Punjab – General, Muslim and Sikh. For the rest of the provinces mostly General and Muslim communities were recognized to be empowered for the purpose of representation. According to the proposals, three sections were stipulated. Section A provinces were Madras, Bombay, United Provinces, Bihar, Central Provinces and Orissa. They were expected to have in all 167 General representatives and 20 Muslim representatives. In section B, the Punjab, North-Western Frontier Province and Sind had nine General, 29 Muslim and four Sikh representatives, totalling 35 for the constitution-making body. In section C, the provinces of Bengal and Assam were to be represented by 34 General and 36 Muslims representatives. The total number for British India was 292 and for the Indian states 93. The constitution-making body was to have 385 representatives to begin with. The method of election to be followed in the Indian states was to be determined by consultation. There would also be chief commissioners' provinces like Delhi represented in the Central Legislative Assembly along with the member representing Ajmer-Marwar.

Clause 19 (iv) stipulated that a preliminary meeting would be held at which the general order of business would be decided, a chairman and other officers elected, and an advisory committee on the rights of citizens, minorities and tribal and excluded areas set-up. Thereafter the provincial representatives would be divided into three sections A, B and C groups of provinces as stated above.

Clause 19 (v) stated: 'These sections shall proceed to settle the Provincial Constitutions of the provinces included in each section, and shall also decide whether any group constitution shall be set up for those provinces, and if so, with what provincial subjects the group should deal. Provinces shall have the power to opt out of the groups in accordance with the provisions of sub-clause (viii).'

In all these matters there was intense politicking, the Viceroy siding with Jinnah, being oversensitive on the exercise of his own powers.

Gandhi's objections to the May 16 statement related first and foremost to the grouping system of the provinces on religious and communal grounds, and the option given to them to secede from the union. Second, he wanted the national government, as he termed the interim government, to be responsible in fact, if not in law, to the elected members of the Central Legislative Assembly. He specifically mentioned that the summons for the election of the members of the Constituent Assembly should be

sent only after the formation of the national government. The national government of his conception ought to be 'a strong, capable and homogenous National Government, without it deep and universal corruption cannot end . . .' He, therefore, pointed out that 'there can be no question of parity whether the Government is allowed to be formed by the Congress or the Muslim League. The best and incorruptible men or women from India are wanted for this purpose.'[76] Third, Gandhi observed that the European members of the provincial assemblies should not vote at the election of delegates for the Constituent Assembly nor should they be elected by the electors of non-Muslim delegates. As for the election of the 93 delegates from the states, it should be determined by the nawab of Bhopal and Jawaharlal Nehru: 'In the absence of the agreed solution there should not be an election of delegates on behalf of the states. The function of looking after the interest of the Princes and their people devolving upon the Advisory Committee referred to in clause 20 of the state paper.' Finally, Gandhi desired that British troops should be withdrawn forthwith. These formed the content of the letter sent by him to the Secretary of State for India on 20 May 1946.[77]

Most of the ideas expressed by Gandhi were not new. He had pointed out to the Cabinet mission on 6 May that the proposed solution was 'worse than Pakistan' and that 'we must either adopt entirely the Congress point of view, if we thought it just or Jinnah's point of view if we thought it juster; but there was no half-way house'.[78] These arguments were hardly helpful. Gandhi wrote on 8 May that the draft proposals were unworkable and hence unacceptable.[79] Similarly, Jinnah's letter stated in effect that 'he never had agreed to anything which was in the document and could not agree to it'. As far as Lord Wavell's attitude was concerned it was one of disgust. He was hostile to what he termed 'the Delegation's methods of appeasement' to the Congress. He said 'so far all the gift of those Magi – the frankincense of goodwill, the myrrh of honeyed words, the gold of promises – have produced little. Indian politicians are not babes even if they do wear something like swaddling clothes.'[80] He felt that 'SOS's vagueness and Cripps's continuous courting, flattery and appeasement of Congress have led them to believe they can get what they want'.[81] He recorded that he had 'heated' arguments with Lord Pethick-Lawrence over 'the method of electing representatives in the Constituent Assembly, so as to get over the injustice to the Muslims in the majority provinces owing to the weightage to the minorities in the Communal award. The SOS was all for accepting weightage arguing anything else would antagonise Congress. I argued strongly that the population basis must be taken into account as the fairest and I contended the most democratic method (it is not often that I *introduce democracy* as an argument).'[82] That is how Wavell's mind worked. He further recorded that 'the SOS . . . as I suspected, [had] been very woolly with Nehru over the Executive Council . . . I told him I could not remain responsible for

India unless I had something definite.' Just before the 16 May statement was issued, Lord Wavell asked the mission to consider its next moves if both parties rejected the proposal. He averred: 'They had never considered them and I had to be brusque and challenging to make them face them. I tried to stiffen them to be firm with Congress over our statement and to make it clear that if they turned it down they would not get a better offer. SOS was a little pained and shocked at my attitude but I am sure it did good.'[83] On 15 May, Wavell was busy drafting his broadcast. His inner thoughts were reflected in the following words: 'My reaction was that there has been quite enough, and more than enough, appeasement and pandering of Congress, and that it was time realities were faced.'[84] According to Wavell, the Congress objective was to have 'immediate control of the Centre so that they can deal with Muslims and Princes and thus make at leisure a constitution to suit themselves. I warned him [Nehru] again that there could be no change in the present constitution until a new one was made.'[85]

Lord Wavell was obviously ill at ease when grappling with political situations or negotiating with Indian politicians whom he decried as 'irresponsible' in the midst of 'an excitable people, whose reactions it is always difficult to predict'.[86] In his note 'Appreciation of Possibilities in India' of 30 May 1946 he expressed his views. He was obsessed with the idea that the Congress might yet again start 'a widespread mass movement... and it would probably be beyond our resources to suppress it, at least without any considerable reinforcements of British troops'.[87] He visualized that 'the proclamation of Martial law and the use of all force at my disposal' might be necessary and the British government needed 'to make a clear statement of the policy and of its determination to enforce it', although he was aware that public opinion both at home and in India would be against such a policy.[88] He did not feel confident that the British government would be able to enter into any agreement with the Congress. His assessment of the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Azad and Sardar Patel, backed by Gandhi, was one of hostility. They were unlikely to be satisfied, Wavell believed, with anything less than complete independence and a total break with the British government.

The Congress, Lord Wavell pointed out, 'has long been a purely revolutionary movement devoted almost entirely to agitation [and] suddenly sees power within its grasp and is not quite able to believe it yet. The leaders are still mistrustful of our intentions and believe we may take away from them what is offered and start another period of repression, if we do not like what they do. They are therefore determined to grasp all the power they can as quickly as possible, and to try to make it impossible for us to take it back. It is as if a starving prisoner was suddenly offered unlimited quantities of food by the gaoler, his instinct is to seize it all at once and to guard it against its being taken away again...'[89] It was a pity that neither Lord

Linlithgow nor Lord Wavell considered the Congress as a responsible political party capable of offering constructive opposition to the government. Suspicious of the quality of leadership, which no doubt was radical in some measure, they never thought of Congress as a patriotic, sober and in many ways politically sound party. They saw the Congress Party as a sponsor of a mass movement against British rule, hence they considered it as an enemy of the government. This was a flawed assessment of the Congress. After all the Congress Party had successfully governed eight of 11 provinces of British India, after winning the elections in 1937, and had been in power between 1937 and 1939.

The problem with Lord Wavell was deeper. He was a soldier on whom the role of politician–statesman was thrust; he was unqualified for a task involving discussion of intricate political and constitutional matters. Besides, he had been involved in the suppression of the Quit India Movement as the chief of the Indian army.[90] In his letter to the King-Emperor, he confessed: 'I can never entirely rid my mind of the recollection that in 1942, at almost the most critical period of the war for India, when I was endeavouring as Commander-in-Chief to secure India with very inadequate resources against Japanese invasion, the supporters of Congress made a deliberate effort to paralyse my communications to the Eastern Front by widespread sabotage and rioting.'[91] Hence he was not inclined to curry favour with the Congress.

His distrust of Gandhi was profound. He confessed to the King: 'My distrust of this shrewd, malevolent, old politician was deep before the conference started; it is deeper than ever now.'[92] He went on: 'I have much sympathy with Jinnah, who is straighter, more positive and more sincere than most of the Congress leaders, but he overcalled his hand in the end, and thereby missed the opportunity of having a more favourable share in an interim government than he is likely to get again. He was naturally disappointed, and indulged in an unjust outburst against the good faith of the Mission and myself. He is a curious character, a lonely, unhappy, arbitrary, self-centred man fighting with much resolution what I fear is a losing battle.'[93] He tried his best to help Jinnah and the Muslim League in a variety of ways, not the least important being his 'rows' with the Cabinet mission which generated a great deal of heat at times, yet he refused 'to abandon the interests of the Muslims' even though he knew that the government might come into conflict with the Congress.[94]

In the event of a threat to peace as a consequence of conflict with the Congress he declared that his 'breakdown plan' would be the best antidote to any Congress movement. At the conference of the governors he did not mince his words against Congress but he was conscious of the fact that the Congress was a powerful organization which could not easily be beaten. The minutes of the conference record the Viceroy's advice to the governors, who were all for the Muslim League: 'Though he had great sympathy

with the Muslims he had to bear in mind that the Congress controlled three-fourths of British India. In the Congress Provinces that party had almost a monopoly of power. They could, if they wished, make government impossible. The police could take on the Congress if the British said that they proposed to rule the country for another 15 or 20 years, but in the absence of such an intention and such a declaration they could not be expected to do it effectively. He had suggested to His Majesty's Government that in the last resort if we got up against Congress in the Congress Provinces, we should withdraw from those Provinces and continue to run North-Eastern and North-Western India under the present constitution by arrangement with the Muslim League until a peaceful hand-over could be arranged. His Majesty's Government had not liked this policy but had not decided on any alternative one…It was manifestly impossible to keep order all over India; and to avoid all risks of getting involved with the Congress.'[95]

Like Linlithgow, Lord Wavell had articulated his plan of action using the noble philosophy of imperialism! As late as July 1946, he had entertained fond hopes of maintaining British authority in a British India controlled by the Congress, if only the British had decided to stay on in India for two decades or more. Linlithgow had made a similar observation before his departure, on 19 October 1943, as recorded by Lord Wavell in his journal, that the British could continue to hold on to India for 30 years at least, if not more.[96] He had even contemplated settling British families on the Himalayan slopes, especially since air-conditioning systems had been developed, so that the British could rule India for even 50 years, He had thought of colonizing areas of India with a permanent population of 200,000 British citizens. Lord Wavell was cast in the Linlithgow mould; they had worked in complete cooperation as commander-in-chief and Viceroy of India before 1943.

The breakdown plan, which Lord Wavell had authored and for which he received much odium from Indians who described it as 'Plan Balkan', was an article of faith for him. He kept repeating his ideas on the subject to the British government at home. It was in fact an emergency plan of withdrawal from the Indian soil in the event of total breakdown of law and order owing to mass movements or 'revolutions'. Sir Francis Wylie had suggested that India was rife for not one but several revolutions. Lord Wavell wanted appropriate preparations for withdrawal to be made to avoid chaos. On 9 August 1946 he emphasized the point to Lord Pethick-Lawrence: 'I have given my recommendation on a final policy in paras 11–14 of my appreciation of May last [30 May 1946]. I am aware that HMG dislikes that policy and I fully realize the difficulties and dangers. But after further consideration and after having seen Governors of all provinces except Madras, Bombay, Orissa and Assam, I can see no better final plan.'[97] He had put forward his ideas to the Cabinet mission three times during its negotiations in India between March and June 1946. He had also sent

a statement of his policy, with some modification, to Prime Minister Attlee on 3 June 1946. He never tired of asking the government to approve what he thought to be a masterstroke of policy of retreat:

To the King-Emperor, he had written on 8 July 1946:

> . . . we are in fact conducting a retreat, and in very difficult circumstance. Now my military instinct when retreating – and I am afraid I have had to make a number of retreats – tell me to show as bold a front as possible and try to stimulate reserves of strength so as to prevent being pressed too closely. I thought the Mission was too prone to parade the weakness of our position . . . I considered that the Mission should have taken and kept the initiative more, and should not have been so dependent on the shifts and changes of a set of inexperienced, short sighted and sometimes malevolent politicians. After all, we are still in-charge of India, and are giving a boon rather than asking one.[98]

This is by far the Viceroy's most lucid articulation on the policy of the government which may be defined as imperialism in retreat.

Lord Wavell discussed at length the strengths and weaknesses of the policies of repression and scuttle in his 'Appreciation' of 30 May 1946 and he enunciated his breakdown plan further. He stated first and foremost: 'A policy of immediate withdrawal of our authority, influence and power from India, unconditionally would to my mind be disastrous and even more fatal to the traditions and morale of our people and to our position in the world than a policy of repression. I could not consent to carry out such a policy.' He preferred a policy of ruthless repression rather than surrendering to the Congress. He continued: 'It remains to examine whether any middle course between "repression" and "scuttle" can be found, if we are unable to persuade the Indians to agree to a peaceful settlement of their constitution.'[99] While he argued against being embroiled with Hindus or Muslims, he accepted:

> Nor do I think that we can possibly accept the position of assisting the Hindus, that is the Congress, to force their will on the Muslims, that would be fatal to our whole position in the Muslim world, and would be an injustice.
>
> The alternative is that, if we are forced into an extreme position, we should hand over the Hindu Provinces, by agreement and as feasibly as possible to Hindu rule, withdrawing our troops, officials and nationals in an orderly manner; and should at the same time support the Muslim Provinces of India against Hindu domination and assist them to work out their own constitution.

> If such were our general policy we should make it quite clear to the Congress at the appropriate time that this would be our policy and that it would result in the division of India. This might compel them to come to terms with the Muslim League.[100]

While advocating such a policy of withdrawal, he was concerned that the army would be divided and 'the actual military operations of withdrawal from Hindustan into Pakistan would be difficult and possibly dangerous'.

Second, 'large minorities like Hindus and Sikhs would be undefended in the Muslim majority provinces and we should have had to abandon our responsibility to minorities, and our own interests in Hindustan'.

Third, he thought such a policy would lead to some sort of 'Northern Ireland in India'. But he declared this would not be a permanent situation: 'We should endeavour to bring about a Union of India on the best terms possible, and then withdraw altogether.'[101]

It is not necessary to discuss the more insoluble problems Lord Wavell would have created for India if his plan had been accepted by the British government. Clement Attlee rejected out of hand Wavell's plan which would have divided India into bits and created a situation like that of Northern Ireland. Lord Wavell did not visualize complete independence for Pakistan but wanted to have a British presence in Pakistani and influence to which even the Muslim League would have objected. Lord Wavell was prepared to follow a most divisive policy without any hope of reconciliation between Hindu India and Muslim India on the one hand and with the British on the other. Yet Lord Wavell insisted: 'I can see no better policy available, and if it were carried out firmly I think it would succeed.' With faith in the efficacy of the policy of firmness he was determined to push its passage through the corridors of power in the India Office and the British Cabinet. His partisan attitude towards the Muslims and his deliberate and determined anti-Congress stance made him the least desirable man at the helm of affairs in India. As long as Wavell was there, Attlee thought, there was little hope of a peaceful negotiated transfer of power to the Indian people. Hence Atlee dismissed wavell, recalling him within a fortnight of his declaration of a firm date for partition and independence of India.

In retrospect, it could be argued, Lord Wavell should have been recalled in July 1946 instead of March 1947. It would have spared the government and the political elements in India many embarrassments. A more astute and accomplished leader like Lord Mountbatten might have prevented the communal situation worsening in late 1946.

Towards Jinnah's Direct Action, August 1946

The statement of the Cabinet mission on 16 May 1946 offered a union of India compromised by the concerns and fears of the dominant political

parties and Indian states. The Congress argued that the plan began the process of dismembering India; hence its serious misgivings against the plan.

Lord Wavell felt that the Congress displayed 'a complete lack of reality' and that it was more concerned with party politics than 'the good of India as a whole'.[102] What he meant was that the Congress should have accepted the regrouping system to allay the fears of the Muslim League. Clause 19 of the 16 May statement later became the bone of contention between the three parties – the British, the Muslim League and the Congress. The Muslim League interpreted the provisions to mean the grouping of Muslim-majority provinces in Groups B and C, the north-western and eastern zones, for the purpose of framing their provincial and group constitutions, 'unfettered' by the union in any way. Subsequent clarifications of the Cabinet mission confirmed the Muslim League's point of view. The Congress asked for the matter to be referred to the federal court or to be settled by arbitration of a tribunal. Cripps was agreeable to the Congress demand but Wavell declared that the Cabinet mission plan was simply an award and not a legal document and the clarifications of the mission should be enough. Finally, however, on 18 August, Jawaharlal Nehru told Lord Wavell that 'they would not oppose grouping by provinces if the provinces wished it', although the Congress 'did not like the idea of grouping and preferred autonomous provinces under the Centre'.[103]

Wavell told Nehru: 'We are giving you a chance of a United India, and are prepared to give every possible help to obtain it. But we are not prepared simply to abdicate to one political party.' He further advocated 'a coalition government in which the Muslims will feel that they are not at the mercy of a Hindu majority. This will undoubtedly entail concession to the Muslim in the matter of numbers.'[104] The arguments of Wavell appeared quite sensible on the face of it but there were snags all the way, as the Congress saw and as later events testified. Wavell had believed that the Congress refusal to accept the proposition raised, as he called it, 'suspicions' in his mind 'regarding the objectives of Congress' which seemed to him to be 'to secure control of the Centre, entirely eliminate British influence and deal with Muslims and states with a high hand, we are asked to guarantee independence and hand over complete control to a government responsible to a Central Legislature which has a Hindu majority'.[105]

The question of the formation and powers of the interim government needed to be resolved. The Congress believed it should 'function as a Cabinet responsible to the Central Legislature and that it must be in fact, if not on law, virtually independent'. The Congress wanted a truly national government like a dominion cabinet. Lord Wavell objected to the use of the term 'dominion cabinet' signifying that it impinged on the powers and prerogatives of the Viceroy. On 30 May 1946, Maulana Azad, in reply to Lord

Wavell's letter of 25 May, clarified: 'I said that His Majesty's Government should treat the new interim government with the same close consultation as a Dominion Government.'[106]

Lord Wavell's inept handling of political situations, his over-zealousness in maintaining the position and prestige of the office of the Viceroy, his own self-righteous attitude and dogmatism became a source of concern to the Attlee government. He complained that the Secretary of State for India 'had been very woolly with Nehru over the Executive council . . . I told him [Lord Pethick-Lawrence] I could not remain responsible for India unless I had something definite.'[107] After issuing this threat to Pethick-Lawrence, Wavell met Nehru the next day for an hour and a half, telling him that 'they would not give in on the parity issue' and 'I made it clear that I was quite definite and not proposing to compromise.'[108] All this was against the wishes of the Cabinet mission which, according to Wavell, was prepared 'to make a convention depriving the Viceroy of his powers and handing over supreme control to the interim government'.[109] He recorded his unhappiness about the Cabinet mission in his journal: 'I am sure we should have been all right on both these questions if we had been firm and definite from the start, but the SOS's vagueness and Cripps's continuous courting flattery and appeasement of Congress have led them to believe they can get what they want.'[110] On 15 May 1946, he asked Pethick-Lawrence whether the mission had ever considered the possibility of both parties rejecting the proposals and what the consequences of such a situation would be. He recorded that he advised Pethick-Lawrence 'to be firm with the Congress over our statement and to make it clear that if they turned it down they would not get a better offer. SOS was little pained and shocked at my attitude . . .'[111]

Lord Wavell was mentally and physically fatigued. He recorded on 31 May 1946: 'I am feeling stale and over worked; not sleeping very well, and waking up depressed and worried . . . However I expect I shall manage to carry on though without much enthusiasm for the work. Indian politics and Indian politicians are disheartening to deal with, and we British seem to have lost faith in ourselves and the courage to govern at present.'[112] By July he was working at odds with himself. His over-sensitiveness to normative political issues created unnecessary and avoidable trouble. His assessment of the political situation was often wrong; he was unnecessarily argumentative on non-issues. For instance, at one meeting Nehru talked of 'vital forces at work' in the country which must be taken into account: 'I said it was the business of government to control and direct vital forces and "mass sentiment" and "fundamental issues (which were the sort of phrases he used) and not to follow them blindly, they were ignorant and often misleading".'[113]

Another non-issue was referred to the Prime Minister for a decision. Jawaharlal Nehru had written a letter on 23 July 1946 regarding 'the

status of the interim government'.[114] It was quite a conciliatory letter, there was no hint of any challenge to the British government. Nehru wrote:

> The assurances you gave then were very far from satisfying us but in our urgent desire to find a way out, we did not raise any further objections on this course. You will remember that we have all along attached the greatest importance to what we have called 'the independence in action' of the provisional government. This means the Government should have perfect freedom and that the Governor General should function as a Constitutional head only. Anything else would be more or less a copy of the Executive Council with of course some obvious differences.[115]
>
> It is on the basis of this independence in action, and on this basis only that a satisfactory approach to the problem can be made. Once this is acknowledged and admitted you will find, I think, the other issues relatively do not offer much difficulty . . . This question of status and powers of Provisional Interim Government has therefore to be decided first in unambiguous language . . .[116]

Jawaharlal Nehru went on to say that, unless a decision on this question was reached, 'I am wholly unable to cooperate in the formation of a government suggested by you . . .'[117]

Wavell wrote to Pethick-Lawrence on 24 July 1946, referring to Nehru's letter: 'Coupled with the information that has reached me suggest strongly that Congress in their meeting at Bombay decided on a definite and aggressive line of action. They appear to be convinced that HMG dare not take action against them and will be compelled to acquiesce in any demand they make.'[118] He went on to inform the Secretary of State for India that he would be meeting Nehru on 29 July and proposed to speak to him on the following lines:

(a) What does he [Nehru] mean by independence in action?
(b) Does Nehru propose that the Governor-General should abdicate the responsibilities? I should make it quite plain to him that this was out of the question.
(c) I should then ask what he meant by an independent government with certain inevitable drawbacks . . .[119]

Then Wavell observed, if 'Congress will not participate in the interim government except on the condition that absolute power is handed over to them I propose to speak in perfectly clear terms . . .' He would say: 'But they do not recognize Congress as representing all India and have no intention of handing over power to Congress alone . . . HMG will not accept unilateral demands by Congress.'[120]

According to Wavell: 'Congress intend to declare the Constituent Assembly a sovereign body and try to force on me a government elected by it and dominated by Congress. If Nehru made any reference to Constituent Assembly I would say that HMG meant what they said in the Cabinet mission's statement of 16th May. HMG will not recognize any constitution unless framed in a Constituent Assembly proceedings on the basis of the statement of the 16th May.'[121]

Finally, Wavell gave his own assessment of the situation: 'If, as seems almost certain from Nehru's letter, Congress have decided to challenge HMG and to become the only effective power in India, HMG will have to make up their minds now whether to abdicate or not. I have no doubt whatever that we must if necessary accept the challenge. We have obligations to honour not to hand over the Muslims and other minorities to the unchecked domination of Congress and our own interests demand that we should not surrender tamely.'[122] He sought advice from home: 'I must request most urgent instructions on the policy which HMG proposes to adopt in face of which appears an inevitable challenge by Congress to their authority.'[123]

Let us deal with the Nehru letter and Pethick-Lawrence's reaction to it. He discussed the matter with the Prime Minister and members of the Cabinet mission. In his letter of 26 July 1946, Pethick-Lawrence took pains to emphasize that 'it is the consistent practice of the Indian parties to take up a bargaining position in advance of what they expect to get and we feel that it would be fatal to deal with Nehru's letter on the assumption that it is a final challenge under threat of a direct breach with the Congress'.[124] He further pointed out that neither Nehru's views nor other Congressmen's views appeared to be steeped in extremism: 'In fact there seems to us to be considerable ground for hope that the representative men and women who have been elected to the Constituent Assembly will not pursue extreme courses there. The Constituent Assembly when it meets may have a considerable influence and other voices besides that of the Congress will be heard there. We feel therefore that it is quite vital not to allow any difference with Congress to come to a head before the Constituent Assembly meets at the end of August.'[125] He went on to caution the Viceroy about his meeting with Nehru: 'We regard as quite vital that your conversation with Nehru on the 29th should not end in complete rupture with Congress...'[126] Jawaharlal Nehru was the President of the Indian National Congress. Pethick-Lawrence told Wavell categorically: 'I am afraid we are not prepared to accept assumption of your paragraphs 6 and 7 that challenge by Congress to His Majesty's Government's authority is inevitable. If Nehru proceeds to open threats of violence please report to us what he says and we will consider the situation.'[127] It was obvious that the Cabinet did not have much faith in the assessment of the political situation made by Wavell. Pethick-Lawrence

seemed so upset by the poverty of Wavell's ideas that he instructed him in no uncertain terms: 'If no progress towards agreement results from your conversation and if situation shows signs of moving towards disaster we think that it may be desirable to ask Congress and Muslim League each to send representatives to London to discuss the position.'[128] Wavell's competence to deal with the political situation was thus doubted by the Cabinet. However, to satisfy Lord Wavell's ego, Pethick-Lawrence informed him that he would not be left out of the discussion: 'In that event we should of course wish you to come here to participate in the conversation which would be a continuation of the Cabinet delegation's work though no doubt the Prime Minister would then participate in it.'[129]

Incidentally just a few days before the issue of Nehru's letter cropped up Attlee had in his personal intervention asked Wavell whether he should not like to avail himself of the help of persons with proven constitutional and political experience like Chief Justice Sir Maurice Gwyer. Attlee said: 'Politics has its own technique which can only be acquired by practice and not from text books. I have felt that we had perhaps put you in an unfair position in not having provided you with someone of experience in those things. You as a soldier without political advisers must be in somewhat in the same position as a Prime Minister will be without the advice of the Chief of Staff on military matters.' It was in this context that Attlee had suggested Sir Maurice, 'who has a good knowledge of working of the government at home and of India and who is quite exceptionally qualified on both counts'.[130] Wavell's response to Attlee's suggestion was quite characteristic of him. He brushed it aside and told Attlee he was free to replace him rather than ask the Viceroy to have a politician to assist him. He concluded by saying: 'I have no personal ambition, I have already reached a position far above my experience or merits, and I have no desire except to serve the state to the best of my ability. But as long as I do so I think I must be allowed to exercise my own judgement in the matter of advice I give to His Majesty's Government. I do not believe it has been so very wrong up to date.'[131]

As to the controversy regarding the formation of the interim government, Jinnah had accused the British government of a breach of faith in the matter of constituting the Executive Council of the Viceroy and regarded this as one of the reasons for his call for Direct Action. How far was he justified in also blaming the Congress for the repudiation of all that had been agreed between the Congress and the Muslim League? According to Jinnah, the Muslim League decided to launch the Direct Action to achieve Pakistan. How far was he justified in resorting to Direct Action which led to the enormous loss of life and property and, to an extent, changed the course of events leading to partition of India?

The Direct Action

As far as Jinnah was concerned he had written to Sir Stafford Cripps as early as 9 February 1946 expressing his opposition to the plan for constituting an interim government: 'There is no reason or ground,' he wrote, 'for talking about Interim Government now that the war is over. Besides, it goes against the fundamental principle which we have repeatedly declared that we cannot agree to any arrangement which postulates an All-India government, whether interim or permanent. A caretaker government already exists under the framework of the present constitution viz., the Governor-General-in-Council and there is no need to tinker with it under the new phraseology . . .' Jinnah went on to remind Cripps that the position of the Muslim League had not changed. As long as the exigency of the war demanded, 'all domestic controversies and difference have been by common consent kept in abeyance', but 'without any further delay, make a clear declaration of the policy accepting Pakistan as the only solution of India's constitutional problem'.[132] As was usual with Jinnah, before the Cabinet mission began its labours, he stated his position that nothing short of Pakistan would satisfy him. It could be said with some justification that the 16 May statement did not completely reject the concept of Pakistan. By granting the provinces powers to regroup themselves in the north-western and north-eastern zones the Cabinet mission had virtually agreed to an establishment of Pakistan, working within an Indian union for a period of ten years. Jinnah had agreed to work it out when he was assured that the groups would have their own independent executive and legislatures with powers to make their own constitutions; the union centre to be concerned only with the administration of foreign affairs, defence and communications.

Jinnah's doubts regarding the long-term settlement remained, even as he accepted the 16 May statement. On 13 May 1946 Wavell noted: 'Whether or not the Muslim League came into the Interim Government would depend on whether our statement seemed likely to offer a solution of a long-term issue.' According to Lord Wavell: 'His [Jinnah's] fear was that the Congress plan was to get control of the Central Government to shelve the fundamental long-term issue, and concentrate on getting control of the Provinces. He could not come into the Government unless it was on a basis of a long-term settlement satisfactory to him being in view.'[133] Thus the issue of whether there was parity in the interim government between the Muslim League and the Congress was to an extent of secondary importance to Jinnah. The long-term objective of an independent and sovereign state of Pakistan was of primary importance.

The formation of the interim government, by which it was meant the composition of the Executive Council of the Governor-General, caught the attention of the two major parties on two grounds. First, Jinnah asked for parity in the interim government with the Congress: if the Congress

had five members in the Executive Council the Muslim League should also have five Muslim members. Second, Jinnah, the Muslim League President, insisted that he alone should have the powers of nominating Muslim members to the Executive Council. The Congress, claiming to be a national organization, declared that it would nominate members for the Executive Council from any community – Hindu, Muslim and others. The Congress also claimed the right to nominate a member of the Depressed Classes community to the council by virtue of the communal award agreed to earlier. Thus the Congress would have six members inclusive of the Scheduled Caste candidate to which Jinnah objected.[134]

A closer look at the correspondence and agreement arrived at around this period reveals that Jinnah's accusations against the British government and the Congress were unfounded. His claim that the government was guilty of a breach of faith was also misleading. Astute politician that he was, he attempted to use the confusion on the subject at this time to gain political mileage and put the government and the Congress on the defensive.

Wavell replied on 8 August 1946 to Jinnah's letter of 31 July 'about my proposal for an interim government'. Wavell was rather apologetic to Jinnah: 'I am sorry that things have gone the way they have but I don't think it would be profitable now to enter into a detailed discussion, on the points you raise in your letter.'[135] There was no need to be apologetic, but why did Wavell reply so late to Jinnah when he was so sure that Jinnah had accepted the proposition regarding the composition of the interim government on the basis of the ratio 6:5:3? Wavell told Jinnah: 'I will only remind you that the basis of representation which I suggested in the letter to which you now reply is the same as the one the Muslim League Working Committee accepted at the end of June namely 6:5:3.'[136] Jinnah was also informed by Lord Wavell 'that the Interim Government will consist of 14 members. Six members (to include one scheduled caste representation) will be nominated by the Congress. Five members will be nominated by the Muslim League. Three representatives of minorities will be nominated by the Viceroy; one of the places would be for a Sikh.'[137] Jinnah was informed by Wavell on 20 June 1946, after due consultation with the Cabinet delegation: 'I am sure you will appreciate that negotiations designed to secure acceptance by two parties with conflicting interests may not always end on the same basis as that on which they began, and as you know, I never gave you any guarantee that they would necessarily be concluded on any particular basis.'[138] Other points agreed to were that 'there would be no change in the number of 14 members of the Interim Government; that the proportion of members by communities will not be changed without the agreement of the two major parties; and that no decision on a major communal issue could be taken by the Interim Government if the majority of either of the main parties were opposed to it. I pointed this to the Congress President and he agreed that the Congress appreciated the point.'[139]

Now the problem of the majority in the interim government about which Jinnah was worried could never be resolved. After all, even the Sikh leader was, as stated by the Cabinet mission, likely to vote along with the Congress. On the issue of Pakistan, the Christian representative was opposed to it; the question of the Congress majority in the government could not be avoided by any means. The only way to arrive at a consensus was to work in the spirit of give and take. Jinnah seemed so suspicious of the Congress moves that he thought only in terms of resolving issues by counting heads as Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Scheduled Castes and so on.

Wavell recognized that Jinnah's demand to be treated as the sole representative of Muslim India was not fully justified. His objection to Congress nominating a Muslim was also unjustified. Wavell wrote: 'I do not think there is any hope of Congress conceding the nationalist Muslim issue, nor do I think that Jinnah is on firm ground in demanding it. After all there is a Congress Ministry in the Province with the greatest proportion of Muslims, and 1¾ million votes were cast against the Muslim League in the recent elections as compared with 6 million for the League.'[140] However, despite all opposition from Jinnah himself about the proportion 6:5:3, he agreed to it in his interview with Wavell on 3 October 1946. It was agreed that '6 nominees of the Congress will include one Scheduled Castes representative but it must not be taken that the Muslim League has agreed to, or approves of, the Scheduled Caste representative.'[141] He continued to object that 'the Congress should not include in the remaining 5 members of their quota a Muslim of their choice'.[142] However, even the question of nomination of nationalist Muslims was resolved by Jinnah who sprang 'a surprise', as Lord Wavell put it, 'on the Congress by including a Scheduled Caste representative in the Muslim League quota, no doubt as a counter-blast to the Nationalist Muslim, but there is of course more to it than this. I am pretty certain that the Muslim League are looking to their future in Group; and are trying to lay the foundation of an alliance with the Scheduled Castes in this way.'[143]

To sum up, it would appear the passion and heat generated by Jinnah on the question of parity in the Executive Council was not only unwarranted, it was positively mischievous since it created confusion in Muslim opinion. It made the Muslims feel, mistakenly, that it was the Congress which sabotaged the advantage which the Muslim League was likely to have gained on the issue of parity between the Muslims and Hindus. The net outcome of the controversy was accentuation of the tensions between the two communities, which could have been avoided.

Thus, the Muslim League's allegations in its resolution of 29 July 1946 that 'the Cabinet Delegation and the Viceroy have gone back on their word in postponing the formation of the interim government . . . and have broken their solemn pledges given in writing to the Muslim League in this connection' and the Indian National Congress's intransigence have been

critically examined. Jinnah's allegations were unfounded and essentially politically motivated.

If the Direct Action was resorted to, against whom was it directed? It was not directed against the government although the British were alleged to have broken solemn pledges. Nor was the Direct Action supposed to be a non-cooperation movement, as stated by Jinnah. No programme was ever recommended to the so-called 'Muslim nation' who were asked to resort to Direct Action. But, in the Muslim League-governed provinces like Bengal, communal violence erupted, resulting in 'the great Calcutta killings'. The communal violence in Calcutta, by all accounts, was a state-sponsored affair. During the 48 hours of violence, the police and military stood aloof while murders, loot, arson and rapes were taking place. The Governor of Bengal refused to interfere declaring that he was following the best traditions of provincial autonomy. The Muslim League government was not dismissed nor was section 93 invoked to curb the mob fury and violence, thus exacerbating Hindu–Muslim relations further.

A further cause of affront and conflict as put forward by the Muslim League resolution of 29 July 1946 was that 'the Congress is bent upon setting up caste-Hindu Raj in India with the connivance of the British', and that 'the Congress claimed that the Constituent Assembly is a sovereign body and can take such decision as it may think proper in total disregard of the terms and the basis on which it was proposed to be set up'.[144] The Muslim League further observed: 'the Congress has accepted the long-term plan of the Cabinet Mission only conditionally with resolution' and 'the Congress interpretation was totally opposed to the Mission's statement of 25 May, particularly with regard to the grouping of the Provinces which is the corner-stone of the long-term scheme'. Hence the Council of the All-India Muslim League declared that 'now the time has come for the Muslim Nation to resort to Direct Action to achieve Pakistan, to assert their just rights, to vindicate their honour and get rid of the present British slavery and contemplated future caste-Hindu domination'.[145]

Reference was made by the Muslim League to the press conference of 10 July 1946 of Jawaharlal Nehru, who was then President of the Indian National Congress, who did say that he expected the Constituent Assembly to be a sovereign body 'more or less' and 'subject to two considerations. First, a proper arrangement for the Minorities and second, a treaty between India and England.'[146]

The press conference of Jawaharlal Nehru has been regarded as a turning point in the relations with the Muslim League. Wavell characterized it as 'most unwise and provocative' and, according to him, Jinnah retaliated by passing a Muslim League resolution 'in favour of direct action, i.e., rebellion'.[147] Lord Pethick-Lawrence, writing to Lord Wavell on 31 July 1946, recognized that the 'attitude taken by the League clearly creates a most dangerous situation', but was quite certain that Jinnah's call for Direct

Action was ill-advised and unnecessary even as the Cabinet took a firm stand against the Muslim League, pointing out that it had already given an assurance, which was asked for by Jinnah, and there was no necessity of creating a turmoil on the issue. He quoted the exact words of the assurance: 'We [the Cabinet mission and the Viceroy] do not propose to make discrimination in the treatment of either party and we shall go ahead with the plan laid down in the statement of May 16th as far as circumstances permit, if either party accepts, but we hope that both will accept.'[148] It was also pointed out that 'it is impossible to allow Jinnah's non-cooperation to hold up progress with formation of an interim government'.[149] The assurance given was published and was widely known, and the Prime Minister's announcement of 15 March in the House of Commons had stated that 'we could not allow a minority to stand in the way of the progress of majority'.[150] Hence the Cabinet decision to proceed without the Muslim League, as Pethick-Lawrence observed, 'is undoubtedly a grave one but I can see no practicable alternative. We can't carry on for any length of time an official government without serious trouble both economic and political.'[151] Therefore it was felt by the India and Burma committee of the Cabinet that 'we are virtually bound to convene it [the Constituent Assembly] and allow it to proceed without the Muslim League if they will not come'. Pethick-Lawrence further asked the Viceroy to seek the advice of Jinnah in filling 'the five places reserved for the Muslim League', but, if he declined, 'No doubt it would be necessary in these circumstances to include one or two Nationalist Muslims in Muslim quota. But we think you try to secure three and if possible four independent Muslims and we should not exclude officials such as Hydari if you cannot get independent Muslim politicians.'[152] Some Muslims under the leadership of Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed Ansari had formed in 1928 Nationalist Muslim Party. This group, however, functioned under the aegis of the Indian National Congress. They hardly had any separate existence and supported the Congress by attending its meetings, functions, conferences, etc. In contra-distinction to Muslim League Muslims, they had however begun to be indentified as Nationalist Muslims.

Thus, it would appear that the firm stand taken by the Cabinet ruled out any possibility of a reconciliation with Jinnah though it suggested that the Viceroy should meet Jinnah and perhaps temporize with him. Wavell did not act on the advice of the Cabinet. He replied to Jinnah's letter of 31 July on 8 August. Wavell said in that letter that Jinnah had already agreed to six nominations by the Congress and five nominations by the Muslim League. This issue was raised and regarded by Jinnah as a breach of faith. Why should he not been reminded of the falsity of his accusation in that connection with certain degree of urgency? Granting that Nehru's speech of 10 July exacerbated relations with Muslim League further, Wavell 'thought he [Nehru] was somewhat chastened by the effect which his

intemperate speeches have produced on the Muslim League';[153] it was all the more essential that Wavell should meet Jinnah and talk the matter through.

The Indian National Congress on its part, however, did try to mollify the ruffled feelings of the Muslim League and sought to clarify misunderstandings on each of the issues involved. The Congress working committee resolution of 10 August 1946 stated:

> The Committee further noted that criticisms have been advanced on behalf of the Muslim League to the effect that Congress acceptance of the proposals contained in the statement of May 16 was conditional. The Committee wish to make it clear that while they do not approve of all the proposals contained in this statement, they accepted the scheme in its entirety. They interpreted it so as to resolve the inconsistency contained in it and fill the omissions in accordance with the principles laid down in that statement.[154]

The Congress explained its viewpoint regarding the Constituent Assembly. The resolution stated:

> The Committee have emphasised the sovereign character of the Constituent Assembly, that is, its right to function and draw up the Constitution for India without interference of any external power or authority but the Assembly will naturally function within the internal limitations which are inherent in its task and will further seek the largest measure of cooperation in drawing up the constitution of a free India following the greatest measure of freedom and protection for all just claims and interests. It was with this objective and with the desire to function in the Constituent Assembly and make it a success that the Working Committee passed the resolution of June 26, 1946 which was subsequently ratified by the All-India Congress Committee on July 7th.'[155]

The Congress put forward a reasoned plea that 'in spite of differences in the outlook and the objective of the Congress and the Muslim League' they were prepared to work in cooperation with all including the Muslim League 'in the larger interests of the Country as a whole and the freedom of the people of India'.[156] It is not understood why the government of Lord Wavell ignored these messages of goodwill from the Congress. The studied reluctance of Lord Wavell to bring about conciliation between the two parties gives rise to doubts about his sincerity to get them together for a meaningful dialogue.

On 24 August 1946, eight days after 'the great Calcutta killings', Wavell gave an assurance to Jinnah through a public broadcast that 'the Muslim

League need have no fear of being outvoted on any essential issue; a Coalition Government can only exist and function on the condition that both main parties to it are satisfied. I will see that the most important portfolios are equally shared.'[157] Another point on which he assured the Muslim League related to the power and function of the Constituent Assembly: 'It is desirable also', Wavell declared, 'that the work of the Constituent Assembly should begin as early as possible. I can assure the Muslim League that the procedure laid down in the statement of May 16 regarding the framing of the Provincial and Group Constitutions will be faithfully adhered to; that there can be no question of any change in the fundamental principles proposed for the Constituent Assembly in paragraph 15 of the Cabinet Mission's statement of 16 May or of a decision on a main communal issue, without a majority of both major communities; and that the Congress are ready to agree that any dispute of interpretation may be referred to the Federal Court.'[158]

Why was the above assurance not given before 16 August 1946, the day of Direct Action? The Congress had categorically stated through its working committee resolution of 10 August that it agreed first and foremost to the statement of 16 May 'in its entirety'. Second, that it had argued about 'the sovereign character of the Constituent Assembly' in a general sense as a matter of principle: it was not a new provocative demand. In fact, the Congress had solemnly affirmed that all communal issues would be discussed in a spirit of cooperation. Also it had been the Congress plea all along that any matter of interpretation might be referred to the Federal Court or to a tribunal for arbitration. The Cabinet mission was agreeable on this point. Why should the Viceroy have waited for the communal holocaust to happen before he issued his assurances, on which there were no differences of opinion? This is the vital question.

It is indeed intriguing why such a situation was allowed to develop leading to the Direct Action of Jinnah. On 9 August 1946, C.E.B. Abell, private secretary of the Viceroy, had minuted on the question of assurance, quoting from the opening speech of the Secretary of State for India, in which he had said: 'But having agreed to the statement of May 16, and the Constituent Assembly elected in accordance with that statement they cannot, of course, go outside the terms of what had been agreed . . . it is on the basis of that agreed procedure that HMG have said they will accept the decisions of the Constituent Assembly'.[159] Actually this became the basis of the Muslim League's acquiescence to the scheme. The above assurance given by the Secretary of State for India was in fact 'taken by *Dawn* at the time as an assurance, and it is one'. Lord Wavell agreed with the minute and noted on the file: 'We might be ready with a draft of what might be said to reassure the League'.[160] No action was taken on Lord Wavell's suggestion. We have no way of ascertaining the facts in this connection. But, if Jinnah had been given a timely reassurance, before 16 August 1946, there was a possibility that the

state-sponsored communal violence in Bengal would not have occurred and, as a consequence, the relations between the two communities would not have reached a point of no return. How is it that such a strong and authoritative Viceroy like Lord Wavell was hoodwinked into a situation of complicity, in so far as his orders for issuance of assurance was not complied with?

The attitude of the government to the Direct Action call given by Jinnah was somewhat strange. The Direct Action threat, which Wavell took to mean 'rebellion', was not taken very seriously by him. He underestimated its impact and did not seem unduly worried. Why? Writing to Pethick-Lawrence he merely visualized that the League resolution would 'certainly increase communal tension in the towns which is already bad. Widespread labour trouble exists also and general situation is most unsatisfactory.'[161] Wavell thought that the communal situation would worsen but did not ever visualize a communal holocaust: 'Though situation undoubtedly serious it is possible to take too tragic a view of the League decision.' He mused that 'Jinnah seems unlikely at present to call out his League Ministries; he has few lieutenants who are willing or able to run a mass movement and no ready made organisation'.[162] Of course, 'a *jehad* [holy war] would be a very serious matter.' Investigations on a *jehad* were carried out and the government seemed somewhat relieved to find that Jinnah, being a Shia Muslim, could not declare one and Jinnah knew that 'he has no authority'.[163] Wavell concluded that the 'above appreciation is mainly subject to rapid change in this country of irresponsible politicians and excitable people whose reactions it is difficult to predict, but represents my present views'.[164] His views on the matter proved wrong; his oft-repeated statement on Indian politics being 'unpredictable' suggests his inability to grasp the social and political reality.

Reverting to what Jinnah meant by his Direct Action call, it appears he was not clear himself. Nobody among the Muslim League leaders seemed to know what shape the Direct Action would take. Colin Reid, the correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* in London, interviewed Jinnah on 30 July 1946, one day after his Direct Action call. Jinnah was asked by Reid what he meant by 'direct action', to which he replied that there would be 'a mass illegal movement'. Later, when the text of his interview as recorded by Colin Reid was shown to Jinnah, he changed the word 'illegal' to 'unconstitutional'.[165] Reid said that Jinnah 'was not prepared to specify in any greater detail what this involved and . . . he got the impression they had not really worked out what they were going to do'. One thing, however, had been decided: there would 'a universal Muslim *hartal* on Friday 16 August, and mass meetings in every town and village, where the resolution passed at Bombay would be explained to people'. This, of course, was likely to create mass hysteria. But beyond this nothing had been thought out. Jinnah gave the impression that the doors to dialogue were not closed, 'but the Muslim League would in no circumstances approach the Congress but

would not be averse to approaches being made to it by the Congress or by the British Government'.[166]

However, Liaquat Ali Khan, who was more communicative, told his close acquaintance, Arthur Allen Waugh of the ICS, member of the Viceroy's Council 1945–46 who had worked in UP, that 'it was better for Muslims to resist now, even if it meant bloodshed'; he added 'the shedding of British and Muslim blood would be deplorable but it was better than slow strangulation, or words to that effect...'[167]

One thing was certain: 'Direct Action would be directed not so much at the British as at the Hindus', Khan Bahadur M.A. Khuro of Sind told the Governor of Sind, Sir Francis Mudie. Similarly, Ghulam Hussain Hidaytulla informed Mudie that the decision taken by the Muslim League working committee regarding Direct Action was unanimous and 'if Jinnah had not agreed he would have been swept aside'. It seems there was a strong feeling of resentment among the Muslim leaders that 'they were being driven from one position to another and had to take a stand somewhere. First the yielding on the Union Centre, then the yielding on parity, and now the proposal to yield on the idea that the League was the only representative of Muslim opinion.' Hidaytulla and Khuro suggested, if a reassurance to Jinnah was given by His Majesty's Government, the League would go back to 'its previous position', meaning give up Direct Action.[168] What action was taken on such information? It is not clear; probably nothing was done.

Meanwhile, Wavell called a conference of the Governors of Bengal, United Provinces, Punjab, Sind and North-West Frontier Province on 8 August 1946 to ascertain their views on Direct Action and the prevailing political climate in the country. The Prime Minister of Bengal 'had no idea what Direct Action was likely to mean and had asked for a public holiday on 16th August to avoid trouble on that day', informed the Governor of Bengal.[169] The Governor of UP, Sir Francis Wylie, 'did not expect assaults on the British but rather a straight fight between the Muslims and Hindus'. Nevertheless, it was pointed out by him that the Muslim League leader of the parliamentary party 'did not at present know...what Direct Action would mean. Trouble would presumably begin with communal rioting in the towns. The police were 50 per cent Muslims, and a Congress Ministry would find it very difficult to put down serious disturbances.'[170] In the Punjab, '70 per cent of police were Muslims and had their sympathies with the League. The Unionist Muslims would stand in with the League on major communal issues. The League felt deeply aggrieved but were disorganized and some of their leaders would not be ready to go to jail.' Trouble in the towns and villages would be difficult to deal with.[171] In Sind, it was feared that, if communal trouble started in the countryside, 'those Hindus left in the villages might be exterminated'. Muslims made up 70–80 per cent of the police. The Governor advised invoking section 93 for the administration in Sind.[172]

In summing up, the Viceroy Lord Wavell did not give any guidance in respect of how to deal with Direct Action. He spoke more about his break-down plan and the devious Congress attitude rather than a plan of action to be taken against impending communal catastrophe. On 13 August 1946, the Muslim League mouthpiece, *Star of India*, gave detailed instructions to the Muslim League and Muslims in general on how to conduct themselves on 16 August, the Direct Action day. Muslims were in the middle of *Ramazan* fasting and the *Star of India* reminded them of

> the month of real *jehad* of God's grace and blessings, and spiritual armament and moral and physical purge of the nation . . . Muslims must remember that it was in *Ramazan* that the Qur'an was revealed. It was in *Ramazan* that the permission for *jehad* was granted by Allah. It was in *Ramazan* that the Battle of Badr, the first open conflict between Islam and Heathenism, was fought and won by 313 Muslims and again it was in *Ramazan* that 10,000 Muslims under the Holy Prophet conquered Mecca and established the kingdom of Heaven and the commonwealth of Islam in Arabia. The Muslim League is fortunate that it is starting its action in this holy month.[173]

It was clear that a most forceful religious appeal had been made to Muslims to rise against 'suppression and oppression' and fight a holy war begun by the Muslim League in the holy month of *Ramazan*. The government at the centre ignored the call. The provincial governments remained quiet all along presumably with deliberate intent. Frederick Burrows, the Governor of Bengal, observed that 'law and order' was 'not a discretionary matter' and his role in the constitution, as understood by him, was one of non-intervention. But the more important consideration seemed to be their belief as Francis Wylie, the Governor of UP had put it, that it would be 'a straight fight between the Muslims and Hindus' and it would not be directed against the British. Frederick Burrows informed Lord Wavell on 22 August 1946, a few days after 'the great Calcutta killings' wherein 5,000 persons were killed and more than 15,000 wounded:

> Though 'Direct Action day' was intended to be a gesture against the British there was not, as far as I know, a single case of any attack on a European or even on Anglo-Indian as such. European ships which had suffered seriously in February (and incidentally presented a very tempting target to the crowds at the Ochterlony monument meeting) were left severally alone. It is almost uncanny how in the European shopping centres, the Indian shops had been selected for destruction.[174]

However, there was a general belief among the people of Bengal that the army was deployed only when it was feared that the Europeans might also fall victim to the unprecedented violence. Horace Alexander, who was present in Calcutta when the killings were going on, observed with horror that the Bengal police and later even the army watched with studied unconcern the gory happenings on the streets and bylanes of Calcutta. Not a single Bengali he had met appreciated the role of the Governor of Bengal who followed the policy of masterly inactivity on the pretext of being a constitutional head of the province.[175] Wavell, however, supported the Governor for his inaction: 'I think the governor came out of it well. He could not have intervened at an early stage, and as soon as it became clear that a very serious situation was arising, he took vigorous and sensible action, and his liaison with soldiers was very good.'[176] He was critical of Congress asking for the imposition of section 93, saying that it was opposed to the use of special powers by the governors in the Congress provinces. The fact of the matter was that, except as a retaliation in Bihar, other Congress-ruled provinces maintained law and order, including the United Provinces. Wavell liked to have a coalition government in Bengal but contradicted himself by saying how could there be a coalition when it was not possible to have one at the centre.[177]

Soon after the Calcutta killings, the communal madness gripped Noakhali in East Bengal. Sardar Patel, the home minister at the centre, in spite of 'his keen desire to help and deep anguish', could not give the 'unfortunate and helpless victims some protection': Wavell's government would not allow any interference in the affairs of Bengal since 'Provincial Autonomy serves as a screen to prevent government action'.[178] He informed Sir Stafford Cripps that the Calcutta incident 'pales into insignificance before Noakhali . . . the Governor did nothing to prevent the mischief if he had wished to avoid it . . . the Governor of Bengal throughout these terrible happenings has been enjoying the bracing climate of a hill station known as Darjeeling . . .' He reminded Cripps of his discussion and his fears of communal outrage likely to happen in Bengal and Sind, the Muslim League-ruled provinces, 'and you told me you need not be afraid of Bengal as we have a Governor, who would immediately put Section 93 into operation in case of any serious trouble'.[179] Not only was section 93 not imposed in Bengal but the Muslim League government was allowed to continue to watch the happenings with total inaction, as Horace Alexander had personally witnessed, thus abdicating its responsibility to protect its citizens.

The communal violence escalated in Bihar as a retaliation for what was happening in East Bengal. The official estimate of those killed in Bihar was 8,000 but the Muslim League put the number of killed at 30,000. Soon after the Calcutta killings and as the violence escalated, Wavell kept on reminding Jinnah that neither he nor the Muslim League had issued an 'unequivocal statement condemning what was happening in Eastern

Bengal... He [Jinnah] promised to consider issuing a statement.'[180] But no statement ever came either from his lips or his pen. He kept on complaining of 'Gandhi's outpourings of poison',[181] though, in Noakhali and other places which Gandhi visited by himself on foot, he made the aggressors repent their actions and gave some solace to the victimized men and women.

The communal holocaust was a sound warning of what was likely to happen if Jinnah's Pakistan was not granted. Although Jawaharlal Nehru bravely argued that 'we are not going to shake hands with murder or allow it to determine the country's policy', he accepted that it was a grim reality 'that one may have to face the assassin's knife at any time'.[182] The situation had dramatically changed after these events. Lord Mountbatten observed: 'Don't forget Direct Action day in Calcutta which was a warning of what he [Jinnah] can do just as a demonstration and I think he has the capacity to cause civil war if we didn't meet him half way.' Mountbatten further remarked: 'Jinnah... all he was interested in was power – and protect [*sic*] the Muslims.'[183]

The Pakistan Movement

The Pakistan Movement drew sustenance and strength from the Muslim landed gentry of the Muslim-minority province of UP. They constituted a formidable and dominant class both in the countryside, by virtue of their ownership of land as *taluqdars* and *zamindars*, as well as on the political scene as members of the legislatures in UP and the centre. Their position of social dominance and political influence was, however, threatened by the Congress-led peasant movement in the wake of India's nationalist movement. The peasant and nationalist movements complemented each other; their interests coalesced often drawing support from the tenant classes enhancing their influence and strength through mass participation at the expense of the landed classes. In the aftermath of the 1857 revolt, the British policy sought to conciliate the landed classes to ensure reliable support for British rule. It had been the belief of the British that the landed gentry, modelled as country gentlemen, could form the social base of British rule in India; hence they created this class of what they termed natural leaders of men in India. Following the Whig concept of property and laissez-faire social philosophy, they granted unlimited and unrestricted freedom of ownership of property in land, which led more often than not to misuse of power, resulting in serious agrarian disturbances in different parts of India from time to time. In UP, it became necessary to pass tenancy laws when social and agrarian turmoil engulfed the *taluqdari* regions of Oudh during the course of the non-cooperation movement of 1920–21. The Oudh Rent Act 1921 and the Agra Tenancy Act 1926 were passed by the government of UP to grant relief to various categories of tenants. Again, during the economic depression of 1930–34, coinciding

with the Congress-led Civil Disobedience Movement, the Muslim landed classes found themselves under great pressure to adjust rent against the prices of food grains, which had sharply fallen, as well as to grant remission of rents to the tenants to relieve their distress. Communal violence erupted in the countryside in the wake of the crises created by social and economic upheaval. Muslim landlords and their agents were often targeted and attacked. On the other hand, the landlords took the law into their hands and shot recalcitrant tenants, the majority of whom were Hindus. Thus the class divide accentuated the communal and religious divide.

Throughout these years, the Indian National Congress led by Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru was in the forefront of the campaigns for the protection of the rights of tenants despite the support of the British government led by Governor Harcourt Butler in the 1920s in UP, who was fond of calling the Oudh *taluqdars* 'my Oudh barons', Malcolm Hailey, Governor of UP 1928–34, and Harry Haig during the Pant ministry of 1937–39. All kinds of illegal cesses were imposed on the tenants, yet most of the *taluqdars* were in debt. In 1920–21, A.C. Turner, the settlement commissioner, recorded that 40 per cent of them were indebted to Hindu moneylenders. Not a single well was dug, or canal or bridge constructed on their estates, it was recorded by the other settlement commissioners. Their lavish style of living reminiscent of the nawabi days contributed to their ruin. Harry Haig, Governor of UP 1934–39, was aghast to find how 'pathetic' they were in their belief in the magnanimity of the British government at home who they thought would uphold the sanctity of the *sanads* even in the changed political environment of India.[184] Wavell met the *taluqdars* of Oudh in January 1944 and he thought 'poorly' of them. He recorded in his journal that 'they were a degenerate lot of absentee landlords living in the city instead of on their estates and asking Government to raise their rents'.[185] These good-for-nothing landlords, however, were supporters of the government on the one hand and the mainstay of the Muslim League on the other. Similarly, the Hindu landlords, equally avaricious and depraved, were mostly supporters of the Hindu political body called Hindu Mahasabha. The backbone of the Congress support was the tenantry, whose cause it assiduously espoused. Here was an ample source of animosity between the Congress and the Muslim League and Hindus and Muslims.

Both Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru did precious little to win over the landed classes of UP. In fact they antagonized the Muslim landed interests by their programmes and policies which were oriented towards radicalization of the peasantry. Both of them were in favour of land reforms. Jawaharlal Nehru's priorities were for the establishment of an egalitarian society; for 'the building up of a new political and social order which removes all obstacles and hindrances from the path of freedom and progress'. According to him, the path of progress was obstructed by 'the present day *zamindars* and *taluqdars* [who] are in fact a burden on the country'.[186] In the 1930s,

during the no-rent campaign in UP and the Civil Disobedience Movement, Nehru was engrossed in resolving problems relating to the reduction of rents and agitating for legislation against eviction of tenants from the land they cultivated. However, he advocated an overthrow of the feudal order which vitiated the socio-economic system of the country. 'I am convinced', he said, 'that the *zamindari* system is a system which is injurious to society. This opinion has nothing to do with good *zamindars* or bad *zamindars* and *taluqdars*. It is based on purely economic reasons. Further, I am convinced that this system is utterly divorced from modern conditions and is bound to topple over because of its inherent instability.'[187] H.W. Emerson, home member of the government of India, recorded that Nehru wished 'to buy out the big landlords in the UP and redistribute their estates' among tenants; he was not for confiscation of lands and was prepared to give compensation to the landlords.[188] Throughout 1938–39 there was also talk of abolition of the *zamindari* system, when the Pant ministry was in power in UP. After independence, the *zamindari* system was actually abolished. Jawaharlal Nehru's belief in socialism, 'in establishing a classless society with equal economic justice and opportunity for all; a society organized on a planned basis for the raising of mankind to higher material and cultural levels'[189] created tension among the vested economic and social interests in India.

Gandhi was not in sympathy with the ideology of socialism, which laid stress on the extinction of private property and the inevitability of class war. He expressed his serious misgivings concerning the efficacy of a social transformation brought about by an expropriation of property and achieved by engineering social conflict and violence. Yet he was conscious of the fact that no social and political change of any significance could be brought about unless the peasants and the villages were intimately involved in the process of social transformation. He identified himself with the peasant and believed in the peasant world-view, as Jawaharlal Nehru observed: 'He is the idealised personification of the vast millions. He is the great peasant with a peasant's outlook on affairs with a peasant's blindness to some aspects of life.'[190] He was opposed to all kinds of pompousness and the luxurious style of living associated with the rich or the wealthy landed classes. He attacked the aristocratic style of life as early as 1916:

> Whenever I hear of a great palace rising in any great city of India which is ruled by our great chiefs, I become jealous at once and I say: 'Oh! It is the money that has come from the agriculturist.' Over 75 per cent of the population are agriculturist and they are the men who grow two blades of grass in the place of one. But there cannot be much spirit of self-government about us if we take away from them the whole of the results of their labour. Neither

> the lawyers nor the doctors nor the rich landlords are going to secure it.[191]

Such ideas, coming as they did from the top rung of the leadership of the Congress had unnerved the landed classes in general and the Muslim landed gentry in particular. Indian politics had been radicalized after the 1930s and the tenantry and peasants as a class had formed the backbone of the Congress-led nationalist movement in India. The Muslim *taluqdars* and *zamindars* believed that the Congress – which according to most of them was a party dominated by Hindus – was deliberately designing its policies to overthrow their social dominance by cutting the roots of their economic prosperity and well-being through tenancy laws and by organizing the tenants against them for political objectives.

The National Agriculturist Party led by the nawab of Chhattari and composed of landowners and pro-government loyalists in UP, had been vanquished in the 1937 election, yet it must be stressed that the powerful springs of separatism lay in UP. The fight between the Congress and the Muslim League on the issue of inclusion of nationalist Muslims in the interim government of 1946 had a long history. The recognition of the nationalist Muslims symbolized the erosion of the power and influence of the Muslim League and Jinnah was fighting a war of attrition on this issue with the Congress. He did not compromise on this issue since he was afraid of losing his hold on the block of Muslims, who had been brought under the Muslim League through various mechanisms, sometimes of dubious nature. He remained obdurate and rejected the claim of the Congress as the national organization representing a wide section of Indians including Muslims. It suited Jinnah to wage a verbal war against the Congress denouncing it as a Hindu party and declaring that it did not even represent Scheduled Castes and the Depressed Classes not to speak of Muslims and Christians. Throughout 1945–46, clashes between Nationalist Muslims and Muslim League members were common in UP. More often than not, such clashes led to injuries or death. The fortnightly reports of Governor Francis Wylie to the Viceroy detailed these incidents.[192] Hardly a fortnight passed without a stabbing or murder of a Nationalist Muslim or others followed by communal clashes. Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan, a member of the Viceroy's Council and known for his sympathies for the nationalist cause, was attacked during the Simla Conference in 1945, succumbing to his injuries sustained during the attack later.

The Urdu–Hindi controversy alienated a mass of Muslims in UP. The tradition of communal harmony of the nawabi days and the flowering of the common cultural ethos, represented by Lucknow, was disturbed in the 1920s. Urdu symbolized the common bonds existing between all classes of

Muslims and Hindus, but the Hindi enthusiasts determined to promote Hindi in the universities and government offices, more so during the Pant ministry. This led to a fear psychosis among Muslims. Liaquat Ali Khan strongly condemned what he called the imposition of Hindi, declaring that Hindus who enjoyed political power were determined to overthrow the influence of Urdu from the life of the people of UP.

The Urdu–Hindi controversy was uncalled for. The richness of the Urdu language was recognized by all: it was a matter of pride for most people in UP including Hindus to be well-versed in Urdu. Love of Urdu poetry transcended class and religious boundaries in UP. Everybody enjoyed the pulsating ambience of a *mushaira* (poets' gathering) when Hindu and Muslim poets well-versed in Urdu recited their compositions, poems and *ghazals*, enthralling the audience. Urdu had become the language of culture and sophistication and Urdu spoken in the Lucknoui style uplifted the spirit of one and all. No doubt emotionally Urdu tended to strengthen Muslim solidarity, but over the generations Hindus shared the cultural ethos of the literature and philosophy expressed in Urdu. With the growth of separatism, however, especially with the onrush of the Aligarh movement, the Muslim intelligentsia sought to promote an Islamic political identity, creating some kind of antipathy towards the Hindu community. Hindu enthusiasts also, many of them well-known leaders of the Congress, were responsible for injecting bitterness into the whole controversy. Mutual distrust and disrespect resulted and the perceptions of cultural differences between Hindus and Muslims were heightened in the wake of conflicting economic interests. Finally, as the Pakistan demand crystallized after 1940, Urdu became the vehicle of expression of Muslim nationalism and, despite the linguistic and ethnic differences which characterized the Punjabi, Sindhi and Bilochi peoples of north-western India and the Bengalis of Bengal, Urdu united them and it became a symbol of the two-nation theory in the pre-partition days.

Thus the springs of alienation and antipathy among Muslims against Hindus can be traced to the Muslim-minority province of UP. Urduization and Islamization of society went hand in hand. It is ironic that the same Urdu language, which was considered to be a uniting factor among Muslims of all regions notably in the north-western and eastern zones, became a divisive force after the establishment of Pakistan. Bengalis considered the imposition of Urdu in East Pakistan as a symbol of Punjabi imperialism. They resisted with all their might against the process of Urduization of the Bengali language and culture. Ethnicity and language proved to be a much stronger bond among the Bengalis than Islam. They refused to accept the constitutional validity of Urdu as the national language of Pakistan. With the convergence of other factors, notably the perceived economic grievances of Bengalis, who traced their miseries to western Pakistani rule, a national war of independence was fought against

overbearing political domination, and a new independent nation of Bangladesh was born. Similarly, the Urdu-speaking migrants from UP constituted the bulk of *mohajirs* (refugees) in Karachi and Sind without being absorbed in the social and economic milieu of Pakistan. The Punjab of pre-partition days which prided itself on being Urdu-speaking since 1849, when Punjab was annexed by the British after the defeat of the Sikhs, also became less and less Urdu-speaking as the Punjabis maintained their dominance in the politics of Pakistan. Punjabi, as a language, has been strengthened in the Pakistan Punjab and there is a marked decline as far as the Urdu-speaking population is concerned in the Punjab today. Other ethnic groups like the Pukhtuns of the north-western region refused to recognize Urdu as their language which has resulted in a building up of tensions in the region against the Punjabis.

In the Muslim-majority provinces of the Punjab and Bengal, Muslims maintained their position of dominance by virtue of their numbers both in the legislatures and the services, hence there was no compelling urgency to demand Pakistan. Until 1943 or so, the position of the Muslim League in these provinces therefore remained shaky and uncertain compared to the dominant parties – the Unionists in the Punjab and the Proja Krishak Party of Fazul Haq in Bengal. The elections of 1945–46, however, gave the Muslim League a decisive swing both in the Punjab and Bengal because they were fought on the issue of Pakistan and a separate homeland for Muslims. The emotional appeal which the Pakistan call made on the Muslim masses won the day for Jinnah and his Muslim League. As long as the solid block of Muslim Unionists led by Sikander Hyat Khan remained in power in an alliance with Hindu and Sikh landed interests, they fought successfully Jinnah and his Muslim League, and the Pakistan demand remained at the periphery of Punjab politics. After the death of Sikander Hyat Khan in December 1942 the Unionist Party split, despite the powerful Khizr Hyat Khan ruling over the Punjab as premier. Numerous defections to the Muslim League from the ranks of Unionists took place and weakened the party; the death of Sir Chhotu Ram, the leader of the Hindu landed interests, gave a further blow. Meanwhile Jinnah was fiercely active in wrecking the Khizr Hyat Khan government by employing the Muslim League national guards to undermine Khizr Hyat; even he was compelled to affirm his support for the Pakistan demand. When the Unionists lost power after being defeated in the elections, they still were able to forge a government with the support of the Congress and other groups: the Muslim League had emerged as the single largest party but was unable to form government. Premier Khizr Hyat Khan was swimming against the tide and his precarious position was made worse by the relentless tirades of Jinnah against him. Governor Evan Jenkins recorded that Khizr Hyat Khan sought his protection saying that Jinnah was 'a vindictive man' and would exterminate him.[193] Finally, he resigned on 3 March 1947 and vanished from the political scene

of the Punjab. It was indeed pathetic that a premier of a province enjoying full powers should have asked for British protection in March 1947.

Sikander Hyat Khan's Unionist Party had successfully run the government in the Punjab by sharing power with the landed interests comprising not only Muslims but also Sikhs and Hindus. He recognized the power and influence of each community proportionate to its numerical and economic strength. By accommodating the legitimate interests and aspirations of the landed gentry, he was able to conciliate all elements and temporize class and communal antagonisms. He observed Pakistan was 'a catching-phrase' and 'a convenient slogan to sway the Muslim masses'. Jinnah and the Muslim League, according to him, saw 'the advantage in adopting a catch phrase which appeals to the masses' and which 'is being utilized by both to exploit the masses'.[194] Although Sikander Hyat Khan scorned the idea of Pakistan, the fact remained that the Muslim masses everywhere, were swayed by such an appeal, dramatically changing the history of India.

Jinnah's two-nation theory did make an impact on the psychology of Muslims. Two ideas moved them most. First, that Muslims had ruled India for ages and Hindus now were denying them this privilege by virtue of their majority. Second, the Hindu majority at the centre was destined to make them subservient to a Hindu oligarchy. Sikander Hyat Khan recognized that a Hindu majority in the central government might

> use its authority and influence to strengthen the position of the Hindu provinces in the political, economic, social and cultural fields at the expense of the Muslim majority provinces on the one hand, while on the other they would try to undermine the authority and position of the latter by unnecessary interference and unjust restrictions and obstructions. These doubts and misgivings may be unfounded. The mutual mistrust, which holds the field, is unfortunate and tragic but the fact remains that suspicion and mistrust does exist and I do not see how it is to be removed except by some such device as I have suggested.[195]

Sikander Hyat Khan's scheme stipulated an all-India federation on a regional basis, dividing the country into seven zones, with Muslim- and Hindu-majority areas delineated. Each region would have a regional legislature and executive and each region would be divided into units; each unit would send its representatives to the regional legislature as well as to the Central Legislature according to the agreed formula based on the Government of India Act 1935. The regional legislatures would have complete autonomy to run their own affairs leaving the common concerns like foreign affairs, defence and communications to departments at the centre; each department would be run by a committee consisting of representatives from the federal and regional governments. There were other details but

Jinnah rejected the scheme in favour of the Pakistan resolution of March 1940. Gandhi had been contacted by Sikander Hyat Khan way back in late 1939; he had acknowledged the intrinsic merit of the plan. The main suggestion lay in giving 'complete autonomy and freedom to the units and they were to be demarcated into regions or zones on a territorial basis' not on a communitarian or religious basis. Representatives of the units within each zone would represent their respective units a long side representatives of the regions at the centre. He believed that the 'Centre thus constituted will not be a domineering, hostile Centre looking for opportunities to interfere with the work of the provincial governments, but a sympathetic agency enjoying the confidence and support of the provinces'.[196]

The Punjab situation, however, underwent a radical transformation after the unfortunate demise of Sikander Hyat Khan. Besides, new social formations disturbed the social equilibrium forged by the Unionist leadership. With the growth of economic opportunities a new urban middle class – mostly consisting of Hindu and Sikh business magnates, traders and industrialists – emerged and began to ask for more and more benefits. The new monied classes challenged the social dominance of the landed gentry. Furthermore, the lack of economic opportunities to the poorer Muslims created serious problems. Nearly 80 per cent of the economy of the Punjab was controlled by Hindus and Sikhs; the dominance of Muslims mostly rested on their ownership of landed property; very few of them were industrial or business entrepreneurs. Even in respect of ownership of land, Hindus and Sikhs were not far behind. In fact in certain cases, such as the Lahore division, 46 per cent of the land revenue was paid by the Sikhs. Hindus and Sikhs in Lahore owned more than 67 per cent of shops and 80 per cent of the factories registered, paying ten times more sales tax compared to Muslims. Similarly, the largest number of hospitals, educational institutions (13 out of 16 colleges), libraries and banks were claimed to have been opened and run successfully by non-Muslims of Lahore.[197] Very few Muslims, in fact, were engaged in business or liberal professions. The economic, political and cultural space of Lahore and its status in India's metropolitan centres was mainly due to the contributions of non-Muslims, as claimed by their representatives during the discussion with the Boundary Commission. In the Pakistan Punjab, that is the western Punjab, when Hindus and Muslims migrated to India they left behind 62 per cent of the cultivable land; 80 per cent of this was irrigated land. Hindus and Sikhs together owned 6.7 million acres of cultivable land paying 36 per cent of the land revenue demand. In contrast, Muslims owned only 4.7 million acres in east Punjab and paid 27 per cent of the land revenue. Thus at least 2 million acres were lost by non-Muslims when they migrated.[198] When the communal fires raged during 1946–47, people might have calculated the economic benefits they were likely to reap by exterminating non-Muslims in the west Punjab and Muslims in the east Punjab. The role

of the pirs and *ulama* was no less significant. Accordingly some political analysts like Iftikhar M. Malik have observed: 'More than religion it is the economic utopianism that became the engine of the Pakistan movement.'

Studies of Bengal, especially East Bengal, tend to show that the social cleavages were sharpened owing to the perceived economic disadvantage of the majority of Muslims *vis-à-vis* Hindus. Notable among such studies is Taj-ul-Islam Hashmi's *Pakistan As a Peasant Utopia: Communalization of Class Politics in East Bengal*:[199] With the introduction of a permanent settlement in Bengal at the beginning of British rule in India, big landlords on the Western model, vested with the right to private property in the soil, were created. It was believed that the landed aristocracy thus created would initiate an agricultural revolution on the one hand and lay the social foundations of British rule in India on the other. The landed classes, it was thought, endowed with a modern outlook and having ample leisure at their disposal, would work for a better civilization and in the process would remain firm in their loyalty to British rule. The consequences of the permanent settlement were disastrous. It led to absentee landlordism and rack-renting of the peasant classes. The permanent settlement ensured unalterable land revenue demand from the *zamindars*, the landowning classes, but the rentals demanded by them from the tenants were not fixed. Such a system produced a rapacious form of exploitation of the peasant classes in Bengal.

Even the ancient landlords fell into arrears, being unable to pay the land revenue demand, which was pitched at a very high level being unchangeable and permanent. The lands in such cases were sold off by auction to the highest bidder. These lands of the *zamindars* were purchased by Hindu moneylenders and members of the petty bureaucracy at the district level, who had no stake on the soil. Land thus became a marketable commodity reacting to market forces. The sanctity behind the land was lost and it was no longer regarded as 'mother earth' which fed the population by its bounty and was the source of wealth, prosperity and status in the society. A social revolution of far-reaching consequences had taken place in nineteenth-century Bengal.

Below the *zamindars* in Bengal several intermediary landed interests emerged. For instance, the *jotedars*, who were essentially rich peasants and who rented out their land to other classes of tenants, paid rent themselves to the big *zamindars*. There were also *taluqdars* who were small, petty *zamindars*, unlike the *taluqdars* of UP, who sublet their lands to tenants. Most of the *zamindars* and *taluqdars* were Hindus; the *jotedars* and other categories of tenants consisted of both Hindus and Muslims but the majority of them were Muslims. Hashmi notes that 40–50 per cent of these peasant classes were indebted to Hindu moneylenders. During the economic depression of the 1930s and the Bengal famine of 1943–44, the occupancy tenants lost most of their lands and turned into landless peasants.[200] A major

cause of social conflict arose owing to the plight of sharecroppers, who cultivated the land of *jotedars* and other landed classes on the basis of the crop being shared equally between the cultivator and the *jotedars*. In 1946, the *tebhaga* movement was launched, under which the sharecroppers demanded three shares instead of 50 per cent of the crop. The movement was essentially the product of economic grievances and injustice. Nearly 19 districts of Bengal were engulfed by the movement.

Most of the Hindu *zamindars*, the *bhadralok* (the professional classes) and the *mahajans* (the moneylenders) supported Indian nationalism and were leaders of the provincial and national Congress. When the Government of India Act 1919 gave the franchise to 1.5 million voters in Bengal the benefits of it went to the Muslim peasant classes. The government followed this pro-peasant and pro-Muslim policy in Bengal to counterbalance the growth and power of the Indian National Congress. The enfranchised Muslim peasants defied the Hindu *zamindars* and *bhadralok*. The Muslim *jotedars* demanded the status of the landed proprietary class and many of them began calling themselves *taluqdars*. Fazlul Haq, a Bengali Muslim professional with a *jotedar* background, founded the Proja Krishak Party in 1929. The party comprised tenants and other peasant classes and it fought for their causes; it ruled Bengal from 1937 to 1943 with the support of the Congress. The Bengal Ryots Association, founded in 1920, also grew in strength since it espoused the cause of tenants and demanded the abolition of *zamindari* system in Bengal in the 1940s.

The Muslim League in East Bengal supported the demand for the abolition of *zamindars* in Bengal, unlike in UP where it had implicitly opposed it, since most of the *taluqdars* and *zamindars* there were Muslims. It also declared that the land would be distributed to the tillers of the soil after the attainment of Pakistan. The Muslim League even went one step ahead of the radical left parties and pronounced that the workers would own all industries. The Pakistan appeal converged with the radical programme of land distribution and ownership of property for the workers and peasants. The Muslim League at once projected itself by following the radical programmes as anti-Congress and anti-Hindu. In this task the Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Islam popularized the Muslim League programme in the name of Islam. The appeal of the Muslim League grew owing to its opposition to Hindu *zamindar, bhadralok* and, *mahajan*, and the religious fervour of the rural masses of East Bengal. The Muslim League came out strongly as a defender of faith as well as a liberator from the Hindu stranglehold.

In his analysis of the Noakhali riots of October 1946 Taj-ul-Islam Hashmi showed that most Muslim peasants believed that the Noakhali–Tippera region, where communal passions had been aroused most, was liberated and that Pakistan had been attained: 372 Hindu villages had been destroyed, thousands of homes burnt down and more than 200 Hindus killed, including moneylenders. In the areas around this belt the levels of

communal consciousness were somewhat commensurate with the strained agrarian relations and extent of landlessness.[201] The economic distress in the past famine period in the region was assigned to the Hindu merchant classes, who were blamed for hoarding and not sending grain to market. Most of the promises of radical reforms made by the Muslim League were never meant to be carried out, yet their impact on the psychology of the rural masses was great and the radical left parties lost their political clout in the entire belt. By 1946–47, more and more references to religion and 'Islam in danger' transformed the collective consciousness of Muslim peasants against their 'Hindu tormentors' resulting in the communalization of politics in East Bengal. Most important, however, was the belief of the average Muslim rural youth that Pakistan first and foremost meant the establishment of a 'Muslim Raj', removing Hindu dominance, both political and economic.

Lord Wavell, displaying rare insight into the causes of political conflict among Hindus and Muslims, observed: 'I differ from you about the conflict between Hindu and Muslim being entirely a matter of a difference of ethos. Though I agree as to the contrast between the Muslim and Hindu outlook on life and that the masses can be worked on mainly by appeal of religion, I think that the root of the political conflict so far as the leaders are concerned, lies in the fear of economic domination rather than difference of religion. It has been found that Hindus and Muslims can live together without conflict where there is no fear of economic and political domination, e.g., in the army.'[202] This assessment by the soldier Viceroy had an element of truth except that, even on the matter of outlook on life, there was a great similarity among Hindus and Muslims in the rural hinterland of India. The Indian world-view permeated the cultural ethos of India irrespective of religious and caste differences. The philosophical foundations of the Indian world-view had myriads of common elements enriched by the cultural streams – for instance, Vedanta and Sufism – flowing into it from different directions. The cultural, literary and philosophical roots of such interactions sprang from different religious traditions and not from one religious source only.

No doubt economic disparities combined with a sense of exploitation and deprivation among communities with divergent religious background were bound to accentuate communal bitterness and conflict. This was so in the Noakhali region of East Bengal. Also, historical evidence existed to show that religion was utilized by interested parties to exacerbate class and communal relationships. Pakistan proved to be a most powerful slogan which swept millions of believers off their feet. To most of them Pakistan implicitly meant the establishment of a Muslim Raj. Of course a sense of religious solidarity and identity did exist among the followers of Islam and hence the catchphrase of Pakistan was able to unite them for a common cause, yet the fact remained that Jinnah's call for a separate homeland for

Muslims was actuated more by a desire to get rid of the political domination of the majority community, the Hindus, rather than for the establishment of an Islamic state. It must be stressed that Jinnah invoked the name of Islam and the Holy Prophet not often; he did so on the occasions of holy Eid or other religious festivals when he exhorted Muslims to be united and to be good Muslims. He himself was inconsistent in the performance of religious duties enjoined by Islam; he left others in the Muslim League leadership and the *pirs* and *ulama* to raise Muslims' awareness of Islam in danger. Religion essentially served as a means to achieve a political end.

The partition of India

Jinnah's Direct Action amply demonstrated that he held the key to communal peace in India. Most people drew the inescapable conclusion from the communal carnage of Calcutta, Noakhali and subsequent happenings in Bihar that Pakistan had already become a reality. Unless an agreement was reached on the issue of Pakistan, the danger of a civil war in India threatened.

The Congress, however, moved on groping its way through the communal morass. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad emphasized that the Congress desired 'a peaceful and honourable settlement of the Indo-British problem through the method of negotiations'.[203] He took pains to convince Wavell that the Congress was impelled by 'the constructive spirit' to resolve the problem; this attitude was amply reflected in the Congress working committee resolution, he said. Jawaharlal Nehru also appealed to Wavell to accept the realities of the political situation. In his long conciliatory letter he wrote: 'In spite of my long conversation with you I have been wholly unable to understand why the British Government still talks as it did many years ago. That talk does not fit with its professions. Everybody knows that technical and legal difficulties cannot stand in the way of solving vital national problems. Everybody also knows that we do not consider the British Parliament as our guardian and trustee. When it is acknowledged that India is going to be independent soon and the authority of the British Parliament over India would be ended, where is the difficulty in recognizing that as a fact now? There appears to be some snag somewhere which I am unable to understand.'[204] The snag lay in the mindset of the British government and uncertainty in the thoughts of Wavell about the future plan of action.

It is curious that on the very day when Maulana Azad and Nehru were engaged in exchanging ideas with Wavell on resolving 'the Indo-British problem', Woodrow Wyatt, who was then assisting Stafford Cripps in his task at the Cabinet mission, sent a note of a conversation he had with Jinnah to Wavell. As was well known, Wyatt was a close confidant of Jinnah, and that is why he was taken by Cripps to India to assist him at the Cabinet mission. Wyatt wrote that he met Jinnah on 24 May 1946. Jinnah suggested that

the Cabinet mission should put 'the statement on one side' and 'the British should remain as the binding force in the Indian Centre for some 15 years and deal with defence and foreign affairs for Pakistan and Hindustan consulting the Prime Minister of each state'.[205] In other words, Jinnah did not want the union centre to be manned by Indians and was opposed to the Congress demand for immediate complete independence.

The other Congress demand was that the provisional national government at the centre should function as 'a free government responsible to legislature. The Government or Cabinet must be cohesive and capable of working as a team. The manner in which it is proposed to make it is just to collect odd individuals who however able (and some of them might lack even ability) do not form any kind of team . . . Curiously enough the kind of parity proposed now is even worse than the kind suggested at Simla last year.'[206] This was what Nehru had asked Wavell to bear in mind while forming the provisional government at the centre. During the Cabinet mission discussions in 1946 Jinnah had asked for parity not only with Hindus, which had been accepted already, but parity with all communities combined. As far as Jinnah's ideas on the provisional government were concerned, he was quite clear in his mind that the Muslim League had accepted the statement of 16 May 'as the first step on the road to Pakistan'.[207] Thus the honesty of purpose in working out the Cabinet mission plan was singularly lacking in Jinnah. The view that the Muslim League did not want the interim government to succeed is borne out by a speech of Raja Ghaznafar Ali Khan. In his address to the students at Lahore on 19 October 1946 he had observed: 'The Interim Government is one of the fruits of Direct Action campaign and we shall most scrupulously carry out the order of Mr. Jinnah in any form he orders . . . We are getting into the Interim Government to get a foothold to fight for our cherished goal of Pakistan and I am sure we shall achieve Pakistan.'[208] Sardar Patel complained to Lord Wavell about the import of this speech asking him whether the Raja should have spoken about Pakistan, while 'being a Minister in the Cabinet' and whether he should not be asked to withdraw his speech or withdraw from the government.[209]

It is indeed a curious coincidence that Jinnah, Wavell and Linlithgow, earlier in 1943, all wanted a respite of 15–20 years before the Congress demand for complete independence should be entertained. Probably they hoped that Gandhi, regarded by them as the most 'malevolent' spirit of Indian politics, would have vanished from the scene by then. All of them believed that, as long as Gandhi was alive the chances of reaching a political settlement were bleak. Also in their view, Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel were 'bitter enemies' of the British and their disappearance from the political scene perhaps would enable the British to deal with more amenable and less radical Congress politicians. Jinnah's relation with both the Viceroys was so close that it would not have been a surprise if they actually exchanged ideas of such import among them. It is, however,

ironic that Jinnah hoped to outlive the Indian Congress leaders. He obviously did not know in May 1946 that he was suffering from a fatal disease which removed him from the political scene within two years. He died on 11 September 1948. And of course Gandhi lost his life to a Hindu assassin on 30 January 1948.

Whatever the perceptions of the *dramatis personae* of Indian politics about India's political future, the fact remained that with the failure of the Cabinet mission plan time was running out. One thing was clear, Pakistan was very much on the agenda and the British were the first to acquiesce to it. When the Simla Conference failed in 1945, Wavell had informed the British Cabinet that the time had come to face the issue of Pakistan. Some of the perceptive administrators of the time were of the same opinion. One who was close to the political leaders in the Punjab wrote in a memorandum 'The Pakistan Nettle',[210] probably in November 1945: 'It is now abundantly clear that Pakistan issue has got to be faced fairly and squarely. There is no longer the slightest chance of dodging it. Sometime back there was hope that in the two biggest Muslim provinces, Bengal and the Punjab, the bulk of the Muslims would not support Jinnah in his more extreme demand. Obviously, if in these two provinces the Muslims were not insistent on dividing India, the proposal to do so could be safely negatived. But Jinnah appears to have won them over.' Both in the Punjab and Bengal there had been a decisive swing towards the Muslim League, which had won the elections on the issue of Pakistan. With the emergence of the Muslim League as the only representative, 'with insignificant exceptions', of Muslims of India and in view of its 'solid opposition' to the formation of a central government wherein a Hindu majority existed, it was not 'practicable' to push through such a plan.[211] Moon argued that a decision had to be taken regarding the unity or division of India: 'No doubt the disadvantages of division and the advantages of unity are very great. But it is no use crying for the moon. We have to sacrifice what is ideally best for what is most practicable. We have to ask ourselves what policy would arouse the least formidable opposition. What policy is likely to involve least use of force? For what policy can we secure the greatest measure of active or tacit consent?'

The answers to these questions were provided by the author who was probably Penderel Moon. First and foremost, it asked for a definition in clear terms of the British attitude towards the question of division of India, that is the granting of Pakistan to the Muslims. The conclusions drawn in the memorandum were the following:

1. 'That to come down on the side of Pakistan is likely to be the right decision. This should be our working hypothesis.'
2. 'That we should at once begin to test reactions to this in those quarters whence the most formidable opposition may be expected.'

3. 'That we should be ready in the last resort to throw the whole weight of our power and influence on to the side of Pakistan, if the testings confirm that this is the right decision.'
4. 'If the Pakistan principle is conceded, Jinnah is likely to be more reasonable than he has appeared hitherto, and welcome arrangements for close collaboration between Hindustan and Pakistan.'
5. 'There is more likelihood of obtaining Hindu consent to division than Muslim consent to Union.' It was argued that Hindu opposition to the division would come from the Hindu Mahasabha, the Congress and the Sikhs. The Hindu Mahasabha's 'opposition will be futile and could be ignored', since it had hardly any following in the country. The Congress opposition to the idea of Pakistan is well known but circumstances would force it to reconsider its stand, and it could be 'induced to modify [its] attitude'. As for the Sikhs, some agreement could be arrived at.
6. 'That crude considerations of British interests also point to the same conclusion. For Hindu India is already deeply estranged. Refusal of Pakistan will estrange the Muslims also. Its concession on the other hand will confirm their natural disposition to be friendly towards us, and even the Hindus may come to regard it as the necessary price of freedom.'

The memorandum concluded: 'The demand for Pakistan has unduly scared both the Hindus and ourselves. Concede it and you draw its sting. Grasp it like a man of metal and it is soft as silk remains.'[212]

How much weight the government gave to this working hypothesis is not known, but it can be safely premised that the bureaucracy was influenced greatly by it. In January–February 1946, Penderel Moon and Major Short – known for his expertise on Sikh politics and a close friend of Sikh leaders – prepared a working paper for the Cabinet mission.[213] It advocated 'a simple straightforward policy which will immediately appeal to Indians by its evident justice and integrity' and take into account 'the well-nigh universal demand for transfer of power' and 'the demand for Pakistan'.[214] On all these issues including the formation of the Constituent Assembly and the Executive Council, together with their powers and functions, they advocated an extremely liberal policy and asked the government to allow Indians to 'be in charge of all the organs of government. Let them go on governing . . . Our function will be limited to advice and persuasion. It should be directed towards persuading Congress to discharge the onus which rests on them by satisfying the Muslims.'[215] Having said this, they were fully aware that the problem of Pakistan had to be faced by the Congress as well. In fact in another confidential note of January 1946, Penderel Moon stated that 'a number of Congress leaders and Hindus generally recognize that division of India cannot be avoided'.[216] Thus the mood of the country was slowly but surely being diverted towards the policy of acceptance of Pakistan,

which involved the partition of Bengal and the Punjab. Jinnah was opposed to this. He wanted Pakistan along with an undivided Bengal and Punjab, but under the circumstances at the time this was not acceptable to the Congress or the British government.

The Cabinet mission recognized the strength of arguments in favour of Pakistan, but it made a valiant attempt to thwart it by favouring an all-India federation with a weak centre, permitting the units ample scope for development. Yet the whole plan failed because of a misunderstanding between the Indian political elements, and the ambivalent attitude of the Wavell government.

The Cabinet mission plan had many positive elements and would probably have succeeded had there been a more politically mature Viceroy than Wavell. Unfortunately Lord Wavell did not have an open mind, convinced as he was of the efficacy and inevitability of his own breakdown plan. Interestingly enough he was able to persuade Lord Pethick-Lawrence and A.V. Alexander of the Cabinet mission, Sir Stafford Cripps dissenting, to send the breakdown plan for the consideration of the Cabinet on 3 June 1946.[217] It is said that Stafford Cripps, being ill, did not take part in the discussion when the letter of 3 June was drafted, but he agreed to add his signature after objecting to some of the basic findings relating to anticipated mass uprisings and other salient features.

The British Cabinet, presided over by Attlee, deliberated upon the breakdown plan on 5 June 1946. The Prime Minister conveyed the Cabinet decision on 6 June 1946. Prefacing the response with the remark that the 'Cabinet were not greatly attracted' by the proposals, it categorically stated that 'it was very difficult to take firm decisions about means of meeting a situation which has not yet arisen and seems in fact several moves ahead'.[218] The perceptions of the Cabinet varied sharply from those of the Wavell with regard to the prevailing and anticipated political climate of India: 'We ourselves get the impression that both Moslems and Congress are not anxious to push matters to a sudden crisis', and the 'Cabinet were inclined to doubt whether there would be widespread resistance', nor did they anticipate that the Congress would want to create any crisis. They believed that there were 'responsible elements in the Congress . . . who would throw their weight against irresponsible elements'.[219]

The Cabinet did not fail to notice a contradiction in the Viceroy's arguments. While Wavell was keen to protect the Muslim minorities, the breakdown plan ignored 'the fate of minorities in the Hindu provinces which this proposal would accentuate'.[220] At the same time, 'We should be giving Jinnah the Pakistan which we have so far resisted.' As far as the date of withdrawal, 1 January 1947, suggested by the Viceroy and the Cabinet delegation, the Prime Minister rejected the idea: 'Cabinet did not like the alternative in your paragraph 9 of announcing our intention to withdraw from India by a specific date.'[221]

There was also vague talk of taking India to the United Nations. Even Winston Churchill had mentioned such a move in one of his unguarded moments. The Labour Foreign Secretary, however, objected to 'even a reference to the United Nations', since it 'would be tantamount to a virtual relinquishment of sovereignty and a confession they were incapable of maintaining law and order in India. It is hard to see what practical advantage would result.'[222] Besides, it was argued, 'it would weaken our position in the international affairs to the extent that it would be interpreted as evidence of a decline in British power and resolution.' The Attlee government therefore refused to be a party to such a defeatist attitude. It categorically rejected the view since 'the political consequences of . . . action would obviously be incalculable from every point of view'.[223]

As for 'the military implications' of the break-down plan, the chiefs of staff were of the view that 'it would lead to civil war and would not safeguard our strategic requirements'.[224] It is strange that Wavell, himself a soldier, had not given any attention to such consequences of his plan.

The Calcutta killings had started a chain of events resulting in brutal communal violence in other parts of Bengal, notably in the Noakhali–Tiperra belt, and later retaliation in Bihar. Obviously the communal bitterness and 'outpourings of poison' were bound to affect the working of the interim government which was installed on 22 October 1946. The Muslim League came into the government with an ulterior motive, not to make it a success but to take it as the next step towards the achievement of Pakistan, as Jinnah had confided to Woodrow Wyatt just a few months back in May 1946. Hence, it could be safely premised that the interim government was doomed to fail. The wranglings for the composition of the government, with the Congress insisting on appointing one or two Nationalist Muslims from their quota, and the sharing out of portfolios had ended. The Congress was given the departments of foreign affairs, home and defence. The Muslim League was given the portfolio of finance: not a penny could be sanctioned without a nod from Liaquat Ali Khan, the finance member. The Congress were aghast in finding itself beholden to the Muslim League: there were bickerings and bitterness among the two groups of members hostile to each other in the interim government.

In this atmosphere of discord, the attitude of Wavell complicated matters. He did not take upon himself the role of constitutional head of the central government. Far from it. He was always concerned to see that his powers, functions and prerogatives were not compromised. The powers and status of the interim government were the central issues of negotiations. While Stafford Cripps wanted 'to treat the members of the Executive during the interim period as if they were ministers representing the main political parties and responsible for policies of those parties',[225] Wavell questioned the premise like his predecessor, Lord Linlithgow. Wavell objected to Cripps's formulations and said: 'He could not agree to the form of words

which had been drafted earlier by Sir Stafford Cripps. It was extremely vague and would be interpreted by the Congress in a wide sense. It might even be interpreted to mean that he could not preside at the meetings of the Executive Council.'[226] Cripps visualized a two-party government functioning in India, one led by the Congress and the other by the Muslim League. He went on to advocate: 'Accordingly it would be inappropriate for His Majesty's Government to act through the India Office or through the Viceroy to interfere with the Interim Government in the administration of the Indian affairs.'[227] He was for giving the fullest independence to the political parties represented in the central government without any interference from the Viceroy or the India Office in London or even the Cabinet at home. Wavell would not accept such a provision for conducting the government of India. Thus, in his own way, besides being partisan in favour of the Muslim League, he was bound to obstruct the smooth functioning of the interim government. That is why the experiment failed in a couple of months.

It is important to bear in mind that the Congress and the Muslim League had become like two irreconcilable horses pulling a chariot in opposite directions. Even Jinnah recognized this dilemma at the Simla Conference in 1945. He was candid enough to state: 'The League and the Congress had an entirely different angle of vision. If the proposed Executive Council had come into being every matter before it would have been looked at by the League and the Congress from an entirely different point of view. The idea of Pakistan and the idea of United India were incompatible . . . But the League was determined to have Pakistan.'[228] When Wavell informed Gandhi that the Simla Conference had ended in failure, Gandhi's perceptive remark was that the British government 'would have to decide sooner or later whether to come down on the side of the Congress or League, since they could never reconcile them'.[229] Way back in 1937, when the Congress formed ministries in the provinces in which it had won elections, the question of coalition government with the Muslim League had been raised. Nehru then advanced arguments similar to those of Jinnah in 1945: unless the Muslim League agreed to the programmes and policies of the Congress, the coalition governments were bound to fail.

The Direct Action and its unfortunate consequences had dashed the hopes of harmony between the two important political elements and the communities in India. When the spectre of Pakistan looming, the British made several desperate attempts to dissuade the Muslim leaders and Jinnah from the Pakistan idea. Throughout 1945–46, some of them tried to impress on the Muslim leaders that Pakistan would be an economically inviable state, politically unstable; its very existence would be in danger. But Jinnah remained uncompromising in his resolve. For him, every step which signified the failure of the interim government was an important milestone on the road to Pakistan. That is why Jinnah refused to join the Constituent Assembly. By the beginning of the new year of 1947, Wavell,

in his weekly letter to the Secretary of State for India, informed him that the Congress had failed to derive support from the princes and the Muslim League for the formation and functioning of the Constituent Assembly, resulting in another phase of deadlock.[230] In fact, Nehru had demanded the resignation of the Muslim League at that juncture. Meanwhile, it was decided by Attlee to invite the Indian leaders representing important political elements for a final discussion on the question of transfer of power. On 20 February 1947, based on these deliberations, the Labour government announced in the House of Commons that Britain was no longer interested in keeping India under its control and that it was the government's resolve to grant India independence, transferring power to Indian hands, at the latest by June 1948. It was also announced that a new and separate state of Pakistan, foreign and independent in all respects, would be carved out of the Indian dominion, comprising the Muslim-majority areas of the north-western and eastern zones of India.

Another important decision taken by the Attlee government was to replace Lord Wavell with Lord Mountbatten. It was felt that Wavell would prove unequal to the task of the transfer of power. Attlee had had a taste of Wavell's personal eccentricities. He had complained to the Prime Minister that all kinds of Indians were in touch with the Labour ministers in England behind his back. He also indicated that the policy of the Labour government in regard to India 'amounts to no more than wishful thinking' and that 'matters simply cannot be allowed to drift'.[231] This was an indictment of the Attlee government's policy. In reply, Attlee told Wavell in no uncertain terms that he was overstepping himself: 'I do not quite understand what you mean when you say that you want a definite policy. I should have thought that the policy which is being carried out now was perfectly definite and clear.'[232] As for contacts of ministers with Indians, Attlee wrote: 'it would be quite unprecedented to place a ban upon them as you suggest. No Cabinet Minister has ever been restricted to drawing all his information from official sources. I have myself a number of Indian friends who write to me from time to time. You may be quite sure that there is nothing said to them which would in any way be contrary to the policy which you are carrying out.'[233] It was no doubt too tiresome to tolerate Wavell any further. Attlee in fact recalled him in February 1947.

The Punjab was of crucial significance in terms of ethnic and cultural space and the geographical position it held in the north-western zone. When the partition was announced, everyone in the Punjab was aghast. Although most of the non-Muslims were apprehensive that Pakistan would inevitably involve partition of the Punjab, nobody was prepared to accept the inevitable. Once the idea gained ground, there was catastrophe in the Punjab. It began with the massacre of Sikhs in Rawalpindi. With the resignation of Khizr Hyat Khan as premier of the Punjab on 3 March 1947, the situation worsened further. By 4 March 1947, the whole of

Lahore was burning. Khizr Hyat Khan had been forced out in spite of the fact that he enjoyed the majority in the legislature owing to the support of all the parties except the Muslim League. A search for the next incumbent proved fruitless. Mamdot, the leader of the Muslim League, was nowhere to be found according to Governor Evan Jenkins. He asked Daulatana to form a ministry but he refused saying that Mamdot would cut his throat. Hence, Jenkins himself took over the administration invoking section 93 of the constitution on 4 March 1947.

Meanwhile, the Congress and the Sikhs cried foul declaring that 'in no circumstances are we willing to give the slightest assurance or support to the Muslim League in the formation of a Ministry as we are opposed to Pakistan in any shape or form. It is a most extraordinary event that an administration supported by a Nationalist Coalition which is still in a majority should be dissolved and attempt should be made to set up an administration of a purely communal character which by itself does not command a majority.'[234] In the midst of communal fires, this was simply a cry in the wilderness. However, the Secretary of State for India had advised the Viceroy 'to explore possibilities of a genuine coalition with Sikhs and Hindus' expressing the apprehension at the same time that the Muslim League ministry 'once in power might be less accommodating towards Sikhs', and the government should not involve itself 'in supporting Muslim League ministry in drastic steps to suppress Hindu–Sikh revolt'.[235] Evan Jenkins ignored the suggestion and earned the blame for not doing enough to subdue the Muslim League and save the Sikhs and Hindus from eventual destruction. By August 1947, Lahore, Amritsar, Multan, Rawalpindi rural and Rawalpindi city, Attock, Jhelum, Gurgoan, in fact the whole of Punjab, was ablaze in communal violence and appalling brutalities.

Governor Evan Jenkins pointed out that 'the Sikhs…had a real grievance. The League had never apologized for the Rawalpindi massacre and the continued burning in Lahore and Amritsar was making a reconciliation impossible. The Sikhs now felt and with reason that they would not be safe in a Muslim State!'[236] The Muslim League must try to understand the Sikh viewpoint, observed Evan Jenkins. The Sikhs were quite apprehensive of their fate in the event of the partition of the Punjab. Governor Glancy had opined forcefully as early as 1945 that 'Hindus and Sikhs would not accept to live in Pakistan under Muslim rule'. He suggested that 'HMG should make it clear that they are not going to force under Muslim rule substantial areas, e.g., whole Commissioners' Divisions which are non-Muslim; or in other words that Pakistan involves the Partition of the Punjab'.[237]

The Sikhs were a dynamic, enterprising and prosperous community in the whole of Punjab. They comprised only about 13 per cent of the total population but paid more than 25 per cent of the taxes. In certain divisions, like the Lahore division, they owned enormous assets in land, factories, shops and estates. They ran 400 schools and a number of colleges. They

formed a large proportion of the army. The literacy rate among them was higher than in any other community in the Punjab. In wealth, influence and power, they distinctly occupied a higher position than the Muslims or Hindus.[238] When partition was decided upon the Punjab became the crucible of communal brutality. Everyone believed that 'there was no chance of the Sikhs as a community agreeing to come into Pakistan'. The killings and brutality 'had been appalling and I doubt if anything commensurate has ever happened in history',[239] George Cunningham stated.

Most people asked what went wrong in the Punjab and elsewhere? Lord Halifax asked George Cunningham, the Governor of North-West Frontier Province, for his opinion on the subject: 'Mountbatten says, I believe, in May the two sides were so completely irreconcilable, and the possibility of their cooperation in any form of executive government so remote that unless something was done at once there would have been a complete rift followed by civil disturbance and disorders. I very much doubt if this would have really been so. Certainly as things have turned out, nothing in that case could have been as bad as what has happened. And I think this could have been foreseen.'[240] As to the view of Lord Halifax: 'Perhaps the big mistake was in accelerating the date from June 1948. If the government had stuck to that they would still have had British troops on the ground to see that the two new Dominions start.'[241] The assessment of George Cunningham was correct. He informed Lord Halifax that a Muslim inspector-general of police of Lahore 'agrees entirely that the main reason for the extent of killings was the haste with which the division was done'.[242]

Jinnah wanted Pakistan, comprising the whole of the Punjab, Bengal and Assam with minor adjustments. In Bengal and the Punjab, Muslims were in a majority but not in all districts. In Assam they were in a minority; only in one or two districts did they form a majority. In the Punjab, only the divisions of Rawalpindi and Multan had clear Muslim majorities with 9 million Muslims against 3 million non-Muslims. The divisions of Jullundur and Ambala had 3 million Muslims against 7 million Hindus and others. The Lahore division was better balanced in population compared to others: there were 4 million Muslims and 3 million non-Muslims residing there. Thus it was impossible to force the non-Muslims to opt for Pakistan, refusing them the principle of self-determination. The partition of the Punjab posed formidable problems. On the basis of population alone Sialkot, Gujranwala, Shakhupura had Muslim majorities but Gurdaspur had a very thin majority with 5.9 million Muslims and 5.6 million non-Muslims. In the Amritsar district of the Lahore division the non-Muslim population outnumbered the Muslims. There were many complex factors affecting divisions, districts and *tehsils*, but there was hardly any time to go into them to the satisfaction of the affected populations. A kind of surgical operation was conducted in the Punjab by Lord Radcliffe, the chairman of the Boundary Commission, who drew the demarcation lines in less than three

months. He presented his proposal on 12 August 1947 and vanished from the scene.

The enormous loss of life and property and the tragic happenings in the wake of the transfer of population were not anticipated but nor were they inevitable. Every one of the protagonists must share the blame for the trauma and tragedy faced by millions during the partition months.

Meanwhile, before the communal fires destroyed the goodwill and harmony of Punjabi life, it was argued that the Punjab and Bengal should not be divided since both these provinces were imbued with deep local patriotism. Evan Jenkins argued that the division of the Punjab did not make sense. The minorities problem, giving protection to Hindus and the Sikhs in all districts, continued to pose a threat to law and order. Yet they could be protected once it was decided not to partition. He advised that the Muslim League and Punjabi Muslims should negotiate with Sikhs and Hindus as Punjabis and not as Muslims. At the same time the non-Muslims should respect the Muslim majority and in return have adequate representation in the legislature, in the Cabinet and services, assuming full autonomy in matters of religion and culture. He also suggested constituting a negotiating committee, but nothing came of it since communalism erupted soon after.[243] He blamed the 'bad leadership' of the Muslim League in the Punjab. He thought Raja Ghaznafar Ali's 'political views so irresponsible' as to be hardly worth considering. He met Firoz Khan Noon on 24 March 1947: 'Like all Muslim League leaders, he is very complacent and does not react to the effect of the massacre in Rawalpindi.'[244] He also reported to Lord Mountbatten that Mamdot wanted to form a ministry but said that 'Muslims were not going to accept partition [of the Punjab] and a civil war seemed inevitable. He saw no reason why I should prevent the Muslims from fighting for what they regarded as their right. He spelled out his design to get rid of non-Muslims from the entire area of the Punjab.'[245] On 7 May 1947, his draft letter to Mamdot explained that 'until there was easing of the communal tension and some prospect of agreement between Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs, the formation of Ministry would be dangerous and unwise'. On 14 May 1947, Mamdot still argued in favour of a ministry formation and argued that New Delhi was planning to evacuate Muslims and the Muslims of the Punjab would not 'tolerate such actions'. The Muslim League wanted unity as well as Pakistan, without bothering to win over the Sikhs or Hindus.[246]

In Bengal, the communal situation was equally serious. The communal violence of the Noakhali region had left deep scars on the Hindu population. But when Pakistan almost seemed a reality, the Muslim League leaders including Shahid Suharavardy dramatically changed their stance and called for a united Bengal. Sarat Chandra Bose, the Congress leader, was offered the prime ministership of United Bengal. He almost seemed agreeable to work with Suharavardy for a change. But the Congress rejected the idea

with contempt. In a note to Jinnah on 27 April 1947 Suharavardy argued that Muslims constituted a majority if the Scheduled Castes were counted in their favour. Besides, in most districts, towns and *tehsils* caste Hindus along with 'non-returned' Hindus (meaning the other-caste Hindus) constituted a majority. The caste Hindus were powerful elements of Bengali social and economic life by virtue of their dominance in industry, business and the professions; they could not be dominated by Muslims. The Hindu youths were articulate, conscious of their rights and knew ways of achieving their goals. He went on to argue that Noakhali was merely an aberration and 'it would be ridiculous to draw conclusions on the future from the present set-up'.[247] He emphasized that Muslims cannot 'tyrannize' the minorities in Bengal:

> There were several factors which make such a thing impossible and unbelievable. There is the internal strength of the Hindus themselves; their internal strength which can paralyse any unfair administration. They occupy the most important places in the administration. They are a majority in the services. The administration in the Secretariat is in their hands. The most important and experienced officers of the government are the Hindus. It is just ridiculous to think that their position and influence can be ignored. Over and above this Bengal will have 200 million Hindus on its frontiers which will certainly make it their cause to see that their co-religionists have a fair deal in the provinces.[248]

Despite the rationality of these arguments, there were no takers among the Hindus of Suharavardy's ideas. He even went to the extent of offering a public apology on the anniversary of the Direct Action day in Calcutta on 16 August 1947, admitting his own responsibility for the excesses, yet Hindus would no longer trust him.

In spite of such reasoned appeals, the general atmosphere was one of great tension and crisis. The dreams of maintaining the unity of Bengal and the Punjab were dashed to the ground when the Cabinet at its meeting of the India and Burma Committee asked the Viceroy Mountbatten to inform Jinnah about its views on partition of the Punjab and Bengal. It constituted a warning to Jinnah. The committee minuted:

> They thought Mr. Jinnah might be persuaded to adopt a more reasonable attitude if it could be indicated to him that consequence of refusal would be a settlement less favourable, from his point of view, than that contained in the announcement. For instance, it could be pointed out to him that the proposals in the present form were very unfavourable to the Sikhs and that if the Muslim League refused to accept the scheme, it would be necessary to arrange for

> the partition of the Punjab on a basis which would be substantially less favourable to the Muslims. He may also be reminded that if the Muslim League boycotted the scheme, the only result would be that the Congress Party would have an effective start – building up a strong and well-organized Hindustan.[249]

This must have made Jinnah rethink his position. In fact he had hardly any choice in the matter. Besides, the communal situation was deteriorating very fast. Christie recorded how 'inflammable' the whole situation was; the partition could not be evaded. It was impossible for the British to hold on in India. The British officials in India were 'saddled with tremendous responsibilities, but equipped with no power'. Their position was pitiable: 'Everything that went along was ascribed to their incompetence, sloth or wickedness.'[250] He also noted 'the unimaginable bitterness of communal feeling. I had anticipated that I would find things a good deal worse when I was last in India 14 years ago, but I had never dreamt of any state of mind so utterly unreasonable or so extreme.' He related the incident of a Congress member and Muslim League minister decrying and shouting at each other at a dinner party which he had attended.[251]

The British officers were not always impartial in the handling of communal riots. Evan Jenkins was accused of not calling the army in Lahore to quell the disturbances in which the Sikhs were targeted and their property set on fire. At the same time, he called the army in Amritsar, where Muslims bore the brunt of the Sikh wrath. He defended his action but his reply avoided the allegations relating to Lahore.[252] Similarly, Dr Khan Sahib, Prime Minister of NWFP, alleged that 'Jinnah had no influence in the NWFP and that there was no Muslim League leader in the province other than the Governor and his officials'.[253] Governor Sir Francis Mudie of Sind recorded that he could not care less about the despatch of Sikhs to India and their safety on the way.[254] Jayaprakash Narayan told the press that 'he did not distinguish between the Muslim League and the British'.[255]

The partition of India raised more problems than it solved. The communalization of politics and growth of religious fundamentalism in south Asia can be regarded as a legacy of partition. India was, however, able to embark on the establishment of a democratic, secular polity which recognized equality of rights, freedom and justice for all its citizens irrespective of caste, creed or religion. It was able to contain the rise of a Hindu backlash soon after the partition. The Muslims of India did suffer owing to the creation of Pakistan, since they were considered supporters of the Muslim League. This phase of mutual suspicion came to an end, however, as democratic electoral politics helped all parties to establish their positions. Also, the compulsion of elections based on adult franchise gave Muslims some social standing and power. Many entered mainstream politics, thus

creating a space for themselves in civil society. It was on the economic plane, however, that they took time to rehabilitate themselves. Another important milestone was reached by India when in 1949 it decided to join the British Commonwealth of Nations as a free and full-fledged member, equal in status with other members of the Commonwealth.

A constellation of factors and circumstances led to the partition of India. In addition, the roles of dominant personalities, like Jinnah, Linlithgow, Wavell and Mountbatten, and, to a lesser degree, Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel could not be ignored. Overtaken by events and overwhelmed by the tumultuous social upheaval of the last few months of the British Raj, the Indian leaders seemed to be mere spectators having surrendered their wits as it were to Lord Mountbatten. The answer to the question whether the partition was avoidable is a definite no, at least in 1947.

Notes

1 Wavell, *The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 44.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., p. 45.
4 Wyatt, *Confessions*, p. 137.
5 See Chapter 4.
6 Wavell, *The Viceroy's Journal*, 30 September 1944, p. 9.
7 Ibid.
8 Wavell Papers, Mss. Eur. D. 977/3; also *The Viceroy's Journal*, pp. 94–9.
9 Wyatt, *Confessions*, p. 138.
10 Wavell, *The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 95.
11 Ibid., p. 97.
12 Ibid., pp. 94–5, 98.
13 Ibid., p. 99.
14 Ibid.
15 Menon, *The Transfer of Power in India*, p. 197.
16 Wavell Papers, Mss. Eur. D. 977/3, note of John Thorne, 9 October 1944.
17 Wavell Papers, Mss. Eur. D. 977/5.
18 Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah Papers, IOR. Neg. 10779, Reel 20.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
21 Ibid.
22 Wavell Papers, Mss. Eur. D. 977/5.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
25 Wavell to Amery, 15 July 1945, para 10, Wavell Papers, Mss. Eur. D. 977/4.
26 Ibid., para 12.
27 Wavell, *The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 158.
28 Menon, *Transfer of Power in India*, p. 214.
29 Durga Das, *India from Curzon*, p. 216. Also see A.K. Majumdar, 'Writings on Transfer of Power', in B.R. Nanda (ed.), *Essays in Modern Indian History* (Delhi: 1980), pp. 221–2, f.n. 58.
30 Wavell Papers, Mss. Eur. D. 977/6.
31 UP Sec. Home to Home Sec.GOI, 19 May 1945, IOR/L/PJ/5/274.

32 *CWMG*, 75, app. III, p. 436, 12 January 1940.
33 See Chapter III for more details.
34 Wavell, *The Viceroy's Journal*, 7 May 1946, pp. 260–1.
35 Ibid., 9 May 1946, p. 264.
36 Ibid., 21 November 1945, p. 186.
37 Aga Khan, *The Memoirs of Aga Khan*, foreword by Somerset Maugham, p. xi.
38 Ibid., p. x.
39 Ibid., p. xi.
40 Interview with Clement Attlee, *National Herald*, 4 January 1959, p. 1, col. 5; also 5 January 1959, p. 4, cols 1–2.
41 Churchill to Wavell, 31 August 1945, Wavell, *The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 168.
42 Wavell, *The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 167.
43 Ibid., 3 September 1945, p. 169
44 Durga Das, *India from Curzon*, p. 222.
45 Wavell, *The Viceroy's Journal*, pp. 170–1.
46 Hallett to Wavell, 8 August 1944, IOR/L/PJ/5/273, fortnightly report 1944, no. 237.
47 Hallett to Wavell, 20 July 1944, ibid., no. 236.
48 Wavell, *The Viceroy's Journal*, 8 October 1943, p. 23.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid., 9 April 1946, p. 240.
51 Ibid., 6 October 1945, p. 177.
52 Ibid., 3 November 1945, p. 180.
53 Ibid., the notes of 6 November 1945 can be seen on pp. 181–4 and of 27 December 1945 on pp. 196–9.
54 Ibid., pp. 196–9.
55 Durga Das, *India from Curzon*, p. 226.
56 Wavell, *The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 242.
57 Ibid., 31 August 1945, p. 168.
58 Menon, *Transfer of Power in India*, pp. 227–8.
59 Wyatt, *Confessions*, p. 161.
60 Quoted in 16 May statement of Cabinet mission, 1946. See *The Viceroy's Journal*, app. II, pp. 471–80.
61 *The Viceroy's Journal*, 30 June 1946, 'Retrospect', p. 312.
62 *The Viceroy's Journal*, 1 July 1946, p. 314.
63 *The Viceroy's Journal*, pp. 309–10.
64 Ibid., p. 310.
65 Ibid.
66 30 June 1946, *The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 310.
67 *The Viceroy's Journal*, 11 July 1946, p. 78 and 1 July 1946, p. 315.
68 *The Viceroy's Journal*, app. II, pp. 471–80.
69 Ibid., p. 472, para 4.
70 Ibid., para 5.
71 Ibid., para 6.
72 Ibid., p. 473, para 7.
73 Ibid., para 8.
74 Ibid., p. 475, para 15.
75 Ibid., para 15.
76 Ibid., p. 254.
77 Gandhi to SOS, 20 May 1946, *The Viceroy's Journal*, app. III, pp. 481–2.
78 *The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 260.
79 Ibid., p. 262.

80 Ibid., p. 249.
81 Ibid., p. 268.
82 Ibid., p. 262.
83 Ibid., 13 May 1946, p. 268.
84 Ibid., 15 May 1946, p. 270.
85 Ibid., p. 271.
86 Ibid.
87 Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 31 July 1946, *Transfer of Power*, VIII, no. 96, p. 155. This was an oft-repeated statement of Lord Wavell to the Home authorities.
88 *The Viceroy's Journal*, app. IV, p. 484.
89 Ibid., p. 485.
90 Ibid., p. 483.
91 Wavell to the King, 8 July 1946, *The Viceroy's Journal*, app. VIII, p. 494.
92 Ibid., p. 495.
93 Ibid.
94 Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 9 August 1946, *Transfer of Power*, VIII, no. 133, p. 212.
95 Minutes, 8 August 1946, *Transfer of Power*, VIII, no. 132, p. 208.
96 *The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 33.
97 *Viceroy's Journal*, app. IV, pp. 483–6.
98 *The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 494.
99 Ibid., p. 485, para 10.
100 Ibid., para 1.
101 Ibid., p. 486.
102 Note on talk with Nehru, *The Viceroy's Journal*, 26 May 1946, p. 278.
103 Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 18 August 1946, *Transfer of Power*, VIII, no. 164, p. 248.
104 Note on talk with Nehru, *The Viceroy's Journal*, 26 May 1946, p. 279.
105 Ibid.
106 *The Viceroy's Journal*, 30 May 1946, p. 281.
107 Ibid.
108 Ibid., 13 May 1946, p. 268.
109 Ibid., 14 May 1946.
110 *The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 269.
111 Ibid., 15 May 1946, p. 270.
112 Ibid., p. 282.
113 Ibid., 14 May 1946, p. 269.
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115 Ibid., p. 112.
116 Ibid., p. 113.
117 Ibid.
118 *Transfer of Power*, VIII, no. 71, pp. 111–13.
119 Ibid., para 2.
120 Ibid., para 3, p. 115.
121 Ibid., para 4, p. 115.
122 Ibid., para 4, p. 115.
123 Ibid., para 7.
124 Pethick-Lawrence to Wavell, 26 July 1946, *Transfer of Power*, VIII, no. 79, p. 123.
125 Ibid., para 2, p. 124.
126 Ibid., p. 125.
127 Ibid., para 6.
128 Ibid., para 7.

129 Ibid.
130 *Transfer of Power,* VIII, no. 64, p. 100.
131 Wavell to Prime Minister Attlee, 1 August 1946, *Transfer of Power,* VIII, no. 102, pp. 167–8.
132 Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah Papers, IOR. Neg. 10779, Reel 20.
133 *The Viceroy's Journal,* 13 May 1946, p. 268.
134 Jinnah to Wavell, 31 July 1946, *Transfer of Power,* VIII, no. 97, pp. 156–7.
135 Wavell to Jinnah, 8 August 1946, ibid., no. 131, p. 203.
136 *Transfer of Power,* VIII, no. 63, p. 98.
137 *Transfer of Power,* VII, no. 573, p. 988.
138 Ibid., p. 989.
139 Ibid.
140 Wavell to Andrew Clow, 7 October 1946, *Transfer of Power,* VIII, no. 414, pp. 674–5.
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142 Ibid., para 3.
143 Wavell to F. Bourne, 18 October 1946, *Transfer of Power,* VIII, no. 476, p. 745.
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145 Ibid., p. 139.
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147 Viceroy Wavell to King George VI, 22 October 1946, *Transfer of Power,* VIII, no. 403, p. 770.
148 Cabinet Paper CP (46) 315, 31 July 1946, *Transfer of Power,* VIII, no. 101, p. 164.
149 *Transfer of Power,* VIII, no. 100, p. 162.
150 Ibid., no. 101, p. 164.
151 Secretary of State to Viceroy, 31 July 1946, *Transfer of Power,* VIII, no. 101, p. 164.
152 Ibid., annex to no. 101, p. 166.
153 Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 31 July 1946, *Transfer of Power,* VIII, no. 98, p. 158.
154 *Transfer of Power,* VIII, no. 137, p. 217.
155 Ibid., p. 217–18.
156 Ibid., p. 217.
157 *Transfer of Power,* VIII, no. 199, p. 306.
158 Ibid., pp. 307–8.
159 Ibid., 135, pp. 214–15.
160 Ibid., p. 215.
161 Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 31 July 1946, para 2, *Transfer of Power,* VIII, no. 96, p. 154.
162 Ibid., para 8, p. 155.
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164 *Transfer of Power,* VIII, no. 96, p. 155.
165 Ibid., VIII, no. 108, pp. 174–5.
166 Ibid., p. 174.
167 Waugh to Abell, PSV, 7 August 1946, paras 4 and 5, *Transfer of Power,* VIII, no. 128, p. 199.
168 *Transfer of Power,* VIII, no. 134, pp. 212–14.
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170 Ibid., p. 206.
171 Ibid., p. 207.
172 Ibid., p. 208.

173 Federick Burrows to Wavell, 22 August 1946, *Transfer of Power*, VIII, encl. to no. 197, p. 304.
174 *Transfer of Power*, VIII, no. 197, p. 302.
175 Horace Alexander to Pethick-Lawrence, 22 August 1946, *Transfer of Power*, VIII, no. 194, pp. 288–9.
176 Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 28 August 1946, *Transfer of Power*, VIII, no. 206, para 3, p. 314.
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181 Ibid.
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8

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the nationalist colonial discourse the creation of Pakistan through the partition of India has often been subjected to rigorous political analysis keeping in view various ideological perspectives. In concrete terms it is argued that Pakistan was essentially a British creation. Some scholars and political analysts tend to agree with the simplistic and misleading formulation that the British consciously planned and astutely executed a political enterprise called the partition of India. Such a formulation ignores questions of identity in terms of the nation, region, religion, ethnicity, culture and language, which are now being addressed from different angles and viewpoints. It is essential to examine the complex political processes and other related issues, like the fear of domination of one community over another or the strength and weakness of the religious-based identity of Muslims, so eloquently and forcefully advocated by Jinnah.

Often the term 'British' is used as an omnibus expression suggesting that the entire British community was aware of what was happening in the Indian empire or that it was deeply concerned with the refashioning of British policy in India. Of course, in a democratic polity the people have a say in the making of the government. In a country like Great Britain where free and fair elections were held in the twentieth century, people exercised their vote with a certain degree of political awareness and maturity. Hence, for an adequate understanding of the British policy in relation to India it is appropriate to distinguish the Conservative Party from Labour. The Conservatives were led by Winston Churchill during the war years. His political instinct was for the continuation of the British empire for ever. In this imperial mission he was supported by Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy of India, 1936–43 and Lord Wavell, the next Viceroy, 1943–47.

Linlithgow advocated a policy of holding India by force because India could never be part of the British cultural tradition being 'alien in history, culture and religion'. Clement Attlee had taken strong exception to Linlithgow's ideology of 'crude imperialism', as he called it. Attlee even suggested replacement of the 'defeatist' Viceroy and prevailed upon the War Cabinet to send the Cripps mission in March 1942, armed with

considerable powers to negotiate a constitutional settlement with Indians. He had observed that somebody like Lord Durham, 'who saved Canada for Britain,' should be sent to India, to conciliate Indian political opinion, which stood for democratic rights of freedom and equality based on 'British ethical standards'.

The Cripps mission had almost succeeded until it was sabotaged by Viceroy Linlithgow. He struck at the most crucial moment when Cripps and the Indian National Congress were on the point of signing an agreement with the support of Mohammad Ali Jinnah. The agreement could have paved the way for a reconciliation between the two political elements of India, the Congress and the Muslim League. The main part of the agreement related to the formation of a 'national government' with the defence responsibilities on the administrative side being borne by an Indian minister and the operational aspect of defence being in the charge of the commander-in-chief, Lord Wavell. This arrangement was to continue until the end of the war after which full self-government would be offered to Indians. Linlithgow objected that Cripps had overstepped viceregal authority and power thus weakening the position and prestige of the Viceroy in the eyes of Indians. Winston Churchill, as Prime Minister of Great Britain, recalled Stafford Cripps forthwith without allowing him to sign the agreement. That is how the Cripps mission failed; not on the substantive issue of the Pakistan demand, which Jinnah and Nehru agreed to keep in abeyance until a national government was formed and functioning. Incidentally, President Roosevelt appealed frantically to Churchill not to discontinue the negotiation and not to recall Stafford Cripps, but Churchill did not relent. Few authors of modern Indian history have drawn attention to this aspect of the Cripps mission's grand achievement, which ended ignominiously owing to party politics and the Viceroy's rigid attitudes.

It must be pointed out that the Linlithgow government showed lack of foresight and statesmanship in not declaring its war aims as demanded by the Indian National Congress when the Second World War broke out. It was simply a question of assuring Congress that India would attain dominion status after the war. The Congress was on record that it would have accepted such an assurance and supported the government fully in its war effort. There was no difficulty in giving such an assurance. Parliament had already passed a motion on the issue of dominion status for India while discussing the Government of India Act 1935. The Labour leaders led by Clement Attlee pleaded in vain during September–December 1939 for a declaration of war aims and the befriending of Congress, but the Conservatives did not agree. There are two reasons for this. First, the Conservatives hoped to prolong the British Raj even after the war, as Linlithgow told Lord Wavell in confidence on the eve of his departure in October 1943. And, second, Winston Churchill, Lord Linlithgow and Lord Wavell, detested the Indian National Congress, which was denigrated by them as

a Hindu party controlled by a 'Hindu priesthood caucus'. Linlithgow believed that Hindus as a community were against British rule. He could not 'bear Indians', as Lord Mountbatten observed. Wavell felt so insecure in Delhi that 12,000 police lined the route to the golf club – just 2 kilometres away from the Viceroy's house – where he played golf in the mornings. He recorded in his journal that he was in favour of Muslims. He was the author of the 'breakdown plan' which was so designed that the British withdrawal could be facilitated through the more friendly and reliable Muslim populations of the Muslim-majority provinces of the north-western India. He announced that his plan was to hold the British position in 'the Muslim world'. Attlee's government rejected the plan out of hand. Churchill, during the debate on the India Independence Bill in the House of Commons, attacked the Attlee government for transferring power to 'caste Hindus' represented by Jawaharlal Nehru. He made an astonishing request to Mountbatten that not 'a single hair' of 'a Muslim' in India should suffer under his viceroyalty. All his life he believed the myth that Muslims were a fighting race, informing President Roosevelt that they constituted 75 per cent of the Indian army. Actually Hindus constituted 52 per cent of the Indian army, Muslims 37 per cent, Sikhs 8 per cent; the rest came from other social groups during 1942. His pro-Muslim proclivities and anti-Hindu bias seem to have guided his India policy.

The leaders of the Labour Party, notably Clement Attlee, Stafford Cripps and Lord Pethick-Lawrence, sympathized with the Indian National Congress, despite the mass movements of epic proportions launched by them. They regarded Congress as the 'freedom party' modelled on the British democratic traditions, and termed the Muslim League 'disruptionist'. They treated the Indian leaders with respect and on terms of equality. Linlithgow and Wavell humiliated Congress leaders. Gandhi was 'the most successful humbug', according to Linlithgow. He bewildered them with his ideas and subtle arguments, which could 'tie you in knots', as Lord Willingdon had said. Linlithgow showed him the door, telling him 'there was nothing to be done'; he met Jawaharlal Nehru, the most important leader of the Congress after Gandhi, only once, on 3 October 1939 during his seven and half years of Viceroyalty. He kept meeting other Congress leaders, who were conservative and less radical, hoping to split the Congress during the war years. Meanwhile, his bonhomie with Jinnah continued. He helped him to consolidate his position in the Muslim League and encouraged the Muslim League to gain popularity with Muslims. He remained the League's friend, guide and philosopher throughout his time in India.

The antipathy of the Conservatives to the Indian National Congress and its activities was truly astonishing. The Congress was an all-India political organization. It was a powerful body. Its voice was heard all over India. Its roots lay in villages, towns and provinces of British India. The avowed objective of the Congress was to transform Indian society into a modern

democratic polity guaranteeing civil rights and social justice. Congress modelled itself on British political traditions. It was a democratic party and offered constructive political opposition to the government in power and carried out peaceful agitation for the attainment of its objectives. It had emerged as the most powerful representative of Indians as a whole, until Jinnah claimed to speak for Muslims after 1942–43. The immediate aim of the Congress, however, was to wrest independence for India through a non-violent peaceful movement. It so happened that the mass movements it launched in 1920–21 and 1930–31 became gigantic uprisings and turned into movements of epic proportions. But, within British constitutional law and practice, such movements were not unlawful. Sometimes violence occurred and punishment should have been the natural consequences. Only the Quit India Movement turned out to be violent and parallel governments were formed.

Winston Churchill branded Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru as the 'bitterest enemies' of British rule. Linlithgow identified the Indian National Congress as 'Enemy No. 1' and mobilized the government apparatus for 'extinction' of the Congress. This was long before the Quit India Movement had actually been launched by the Congress. Lord Halifax, formerly Lord Irwin, Viceroy of India 1926–31, once observed to Sir Samuel Hoare, if ever there was one person who was responsible for Indians desiring 'to get rid of the British', it was Churchill. There was another patriotic Briton who was responsible for the Quit India Movement launched by the Congress: he was Lord Linlithgow. Their opposition to the Congress and Indians smacked of the racialism and colour prejudices, rampant among the British ruling classes in India. Somerset Maugham, the greatest British novelist of modern times, was 'shocked beyond disbelief', by the 'crass' colour bar and racism which he witnessed in India during his visit as Sir Aga Khan's guest.

How did the partition of India come about? Partition could be regarded as a product of chance elements. It was not planned by the British in the sense that there was no conscious and deliberate long-term policy devised by them for the division of India. On the contrary, the British considered the forging of Indian unity as a grand achievement of British rule. The partition was essentially a product of wartime politics. Had the Second World War not engulfed the British, threatening their very existence and survival at home and in India, and had not the Indian National Congress resigned from office on the question of war aims, declaring that it would not support the British war effort, there would have been no necessity for the British government in India to woo Jinnah and seek Muslim League support.

The Linlithgow government played the crescent card most effectively during the war years, helping the Muslim League to consolidate its position in Indian politics. In fact if the war had not occurred, Jinnah's influence would have been minimal, if not totally marginalized in Indian politics.

The war suddenly brought into focus the role of the Muslim League which until 1936 was virtually in the doldrums. As it was, it had hardly any power base in 1937. It had lost most of the Muslim seats in elections in UP as well as in the Muslim-majority provinces of the Punjab and Bengal. Nowhere had it emerged as a strong political party capable of forming the government on its own strength. The voice of the Muslim League hardly travelled beyond the conference table before 1936–37. The war transformed the political scenario of India when the government was faced with the problem of securing maximum support for the war effort from different classes and communities in India. Linlithgow threw Gandhi, Nehru and the Congress into the wilderness, refusing to be browbeaten by their demands, however legitimate and collaborated with Jinnah's Muslim League, prompting him to ask for partition of India through the Lahore resolution of the Muslim League in March 1940. Probably, Linlithgow believed by doing so he had succeeded in perpetuating British rule in India.

Wavell capitulated to Jinnah at the Simla Conference in 1945. Jinnah was permitted 'parity' with the Congress, and was recognized as the sole spokesman of Muslims. But he refused to cooperate with Wavell. He declared, first, that he wanted 'parity' with all the rest of the political parties in India, including the Indian National Congress; second, that his Pakistan demand stood inviolate. The Simla Conference ended thereafter.

The Cabinet mission plan of 1946 came to grief not because it was too complex but because of internal clashes between the Cabinet mission and Wavell on the one hand, and misunderstandings between the Congress and the League on the other. Above all, Wavell's handling of the political situation had been clumsy. His anti-Congress profile, often construed as his firm resolve towards Congress, was objected to by the Cabinet mission as well as the senior officials of the India Office like Francis Turnbull and David Monteath. Attlee suggested in July 1946 that Wavell should take counsel from men with proven constitutional and political experience like Sir Maurice Gwyer, the chief justice of India, to enable him to take proper decisions, but Wavell took offence and asked Attlee to appoint another Viceroy with political experience. Throughout the negotiations, he found himself at odds with Pethick-Lawrence, who was 'pained' and 'disappointed' at Wavell's attitude on substantive issues. He thought the mission was determined to follow a policy of 'appeasement' with the Congress, and he asserted that he would not be a party to it, if it was at the expense of Muslims. During the Cripps mission, Linlithgow was keen to say 'Good bye, Mr Cripps'. In 1946, Cripps departed without even wishing Lord Wavell 'Good bye'. Most of his arguments, including words and phrases used, were similar to those of Jinnah or the Muslim League.

Although the Congress should share blame for Jinnah's hostility and intransigence, the Direct Action of August 1946 was not called for. This turned out to be state-sponsored mob violence in Calcutta, which escalated

to other parts of Bengal and Bihar. Wavell, almost as a supplicant, asked Jinnah several times to issue a statement condemning the unprecedented communal violence, but Jinnah did not issue any such statement.

By the end of 1946, it was clear that there was no possibility of conciliation or agreement between the Congress and the League. Nehru had expressed his fears to Wavell in early 1946 that it was impossible for the Congress to work in collaboration with the leadership of the Muslim League for they held diametrically opposite viewpoints on almost all issues. Gandhi also had written to Stafford Cripps that the British must choose either Congress or the Muslim League to work with.

Penderel Moon and Major Short were asked to prepare a comprehensive note on the political situation in India. They probably submitted one report in November 1945 and another in January–February 1946. First, they stated that Pakistan seemed a reality and it must be granted. Second, they observed that British interests would be better served if Pakistan was created; it would be more friendly to Britain by virtue of their past relationship with Jinnah and the Muslim League. Third, they believed that the Congress would not easily forget the treatment meted out to its leaders during the past decade or more; it would be unrealistic to expect favours from Congress in a future relationship. Fourth, strategic considerations also demanded the British favouring the creation of Pakistan, since India was not likely to be pliable and responsive to the military needs of the British. The safety of the Suez Canal and the oil resources of the Middle East might also have been a consideration in the creation of Pakistan. Olaf Caroe made this point in the *Round Table* in March 1949. Later in his book, *The Wells of Power; the Oil Fields of South West Asia*, published in 1951, he pointed out that 'the Gulf opens directly on Karachi, in a real sense its terminus'. He went on to expound his thesis: 'The importance of the Gulf grows greater, not less, as the need for fuel expands, the world contracts, and the shadow lengthens from the north. Its stability can be assured only by the closest accord between the states which surround this Muslim lake, an accord which is under-written by the great powers whose interests are engaged.'[1] In 1946–47, the strategic position of the Middle East and the need for fuel could hardly have escaped the notice of the British.

These considerations seem to have influenced Clement Attlee finally to accept the Pakistan demand which he had not favoured at the beginning of the year 1946. The Cabinet mission plan was a sincere attempt on the part of the Attlee government to maintain the unity of India, keeping in view at the same time the dominant urges and fears of the minorities. He made up his mind after consultations with various parties including the Conservatives and declared that Britain would withdraw from India after transferring power to two political elements, the Congress and the Muslim League, at the latest by June 1948. Lord Mountbatten was appointed in place of Lord Wavell and he completed the transfer of power to Indian hands by 15 August 1947.

The Indian National Congress was able to salvage much of the lost ground and agreed to the partition of India: according to its leaders, no other option was left in view of the unprecedented communal violence engulfing India. In fact, the Indian National Congress had more or less made up its mind to accept partition by April 1946 or so. Earlier, in 1945, the general secretary of the Congress, Acharya Narendra Deva, had warned in a press statement that partition involved a transfer of population and that the people should be ready for it. But few took the warning seriously at that time. Congress had clearly pointed out that Pakistan meant partition of the Punjab as well as of Bengal. But the Congress leadership, it appears, did not anticipate loss of property and life on such a hideous scale.

The greatest blunder of the Congress seems to have been its resignation from the government in 1939 on the issue of the declaration of war aims. Its leaders should have remained in office and continued to demand what they thought right. They did not expect that the provincial assemblies would not be dissolved and the British government would rule under section 93, securing at the same time help of other elements, including the Muslim League. A second mistake was the launching of the Quit India Movement in August 1942. If at all, the Congress should have launched the movement a year earlier. The timing of the Quit India Movement, when the Japanese were at the doors of India, was wrong; with it, the Congress lost the sympathy of the Labour Party.

Mohammad Ali Jinnah was, no doubt, a leader of great resolve; an astute advocate, he was able to argue his case with lucidity and strength. He was an accomplished draftsman, better than any of the other Muslim League leaders. That was his asset; it helped the British to understand the position of the Muslim League better. He was known to be a man of integrity and honesty. He seldom ever sought any office under British rule, unlike the Muslim titled aristocracy. He was a self-made man. He made a fortune by dint of his own merit and was able to contribute to politics without depending on others. It was also fortuitous that most of his opponents or competitors in politics either died, like Sikander Hyat Khan, or made peace with him eventually. But it should be remembered Jinnah was as much a product of the colonial encounter as he was an ally of British imperialism. He never came into confrontation with the British. He admired them and was grateful all along. He helped them when they needed help most, during the war years. Jinnah's role in the communalization of politics cannot be ignored. He himself was not religious. But he used the vocabulary of communalism with such vehemence that it created tremendous antipathy against Hindus. It is sheer coincidence perhaps that Jinnah's anti-Hindu tirades became more frequent after the death of Ruttie Jinnah in 1928; she was known to be a great nationalist and her influence on Jinnah was considerable. Ruttie was lost to Jinnah after her voyage of discovery of Hinduism under the spell of Annie Besant's Theosophical Society.

The cultural space sought by Jinnah's Muslim League invoking a religion-based separate Islamic identity of Muslims in the Hindu-dominated Indian subcontinent brought into sharp focus old feuds and conflicts as the end of the Raj approached. The refusal of the Congress to subscribe to Jinnah's two-nation theory and its insistence on upholding the concept of Indian nationality and unity no doubt complicated the process of political adjustment. But, then, the protagonists of the separatist ideology did not seriously consider that it was possible for several nationalities to function and flourish in a plural civil society within a modern democratic polity.

Once Jinnah made up his mind to work for Pakistan, he continued to serve the cause with unflinching determination. Only once was there a possibility of reconciliation with the Indian National Congress and that was in April 1942, when Stafford Cripps's plan for a national government had been agreed to by the three parties; but Churchill and Linlithgow betrayed it at the last moment and the opportunity was lost forever. Afterwards, Jinnah prefaced each and every statement before entering negotiations with the demand for Pakistan. Yet it would have been possible to work out the Cabinet mission plan provided a better and more politically mature Viceroy like Lord Mountbatten had been in charge. Whatever chances for conciliation existed were destroyed by Wavell's lack of political finesse.

Mountbatten proved to be a skilful negotiator. He might well have made a success of the Cabinet mission plan. The main hurdle against which Congress argued related to the constitution of a weak centre under the plan. Another genuine fear of the Congress was that the country would be dismembered if the right to secede was guaranteed to groups of provinces or Indian states wanting independence. Since Jinnah was keen to have an undivided Punjab and Bengal, he could perhaps have been persuaded to reconsider the question of a strong centre in 1946. However, that matter was not raised in 1947 in the midst of communal fires raging in the Punjab and Bengal and other regions.

Mountbatten wielded enormous power and influence as the last Viceroy of India and the first Indian Governor-General after independence. The Labour government gave him ample discretionary powers in negotiations; he insisted on full support from the government in matters needing quick decisions. In India, he developed a close and cordial relation with Congress leaders, including Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel and Gandhi. His style was different. He opened up the Viceroy's house to almost everybody. He lavishly entertained Indian guests, sometimes exceeding 15,000, unfazed by viceregal protocol and rigid procedures. V.P. Menon, the diminutive Reforms Commissioner of Wavell and Mountbatten, recalled that he never met Wavell even once during three years of his viceroyalty. For Mountbatten he became the key figure in drafting partition documents;

he worked face to face with the Viceroy and other British members of Mountbatten's staff. Menon was also a confidant of Sardar Patel. Mountbatten was unable to make friends with Jinnah. He believed that, if only he had met Jinnah before he had made up his mind for Pakistan, things would have been different.

The British ICS component was still in position. The commander-in-chief of the Indian army was British. After independence the commanders-in-chief of both countries, India and Pakistan, were British, as were many staff members of the two armies, navies and air forces. They were managed with aplomb and ease by Mountbatten. He was sharp, swift and decisive without being domineering. He ensured that the administrative machinery still moved in spite of the great crisis and emergency of the partition days. He was not merely a constitutional head of the Indian government. He presided over the partition committee meetings and other bodies with effect and efficiency. The Indian leaders looked to him for guidance.

The partition was a great tragedy. The British, the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League must share the responsibility in some measure for the horrendous happenings during partition. As this study shows, the partition was not inevitable. A convergence of complex socio-economic conditions and political compulsions in the wake of an intense colonial encounter provided the setting for the climactic event of partition and independence at the end of the British Raj. However, it must be recognized that in the midst of bigotry, belligerence and brutality, instances of humanity and compassion for the neighbour were not lacking among Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs in the Punjab or in Bengal. Also, a sense of repentance for has helped to cleanse and refine the sentiments of these communities which essentially belonged to the same cultural space in spite of their separate religious identities. The elements constituting an Indian cultural ethos must inform our consciousness while building a nation-state. On the other hand, the communalization of politics in India, which is an offshoot of partition politics, must be contained through conscious efforts.

In spite of a subdued optimism generated by the membership of India of the British Commonwealth of Nations, Indo-British relations have remained constrained in the post-colonial era. After the loss of the Indian empire and the devastation suffered during the years of war, the British economy and society needed to be revived. A much closer relationship with India would have brought about sustained economic benefits and growth to both countries, but the British policy was hesitant and ambivalent. A renewal of faith and resurgence of spirit among the two democracies and a commonality of interest should reinforce the relationship. This can only happen if both countries move out of their suspicious grooves and grasp the opportunities created by the new global economic order and

technological revolution in which India can be an important and potential contributor.

Note

1 Quoted by Girilal Jain, resident editor of *The Times of India* in the 1970s, in his article 'India, Pakistan and Kashmir', in B.R. Nanda (ed.), *Indian Foreign Policy: The Nehru Years* (Delhi: 1976), p. 53.

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Aga Khan, Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah, b. 1877; hereditary chief & head of the Ismailis; Member, Imperial Leg. Council 1902–4; Member, Simla Deputation 1906; President, Muslim League 1907–12; Vice-Chancellor, Aligarh Muslim University 1921; Privy Councillor 1924; led India to League of Nations 1932, 1934–7; President, League of Nations 1937; d. 1957.

Ahmad, Dr Sir Ziauddin, b. 1876; educationist, politician, ed. Allahabad, Cambridge, Paris, Bologna 1901–9; Principal, M.A.O. College Aligarh 1911; Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Aligarh University 1920–8; Vice-Chancellor 1935–8; Member UP Leg. Council 1923–6; Central Leg. Assembly 1930; supported Muslim League and Pakistan; d. 1947.

Ali, Asaf, b. 1888, ed. Delhi, London, Bar-at-Law 1912; participated in khilafat and Non-Cooperation Movements; General Secretary Indian National Congress 1927; Minister of Interim Govt formed in August 1946; d. 1953.

Ali, Chaudhry Rahmat, b. 1897; ed. Lahore, Cambridge, called to the Bar 1943; author of Pakistan idea, popularizing at the Round Table Conference 1930–1; led Pakistan National Movement 1930–3 in England; visited India 1940; Pakistan 1948; Wrote *Pakistan: The Fatherland of the Pak Nation* (1947); d. & buried in Cambridge 1951.

Ali, Maulana Muhammad, b. 1878; ed. Aligarh, Oxford 1898–1902; founded Eng. weekly *Comrade* (Calcutta); *Hamdard*, Urdu weekly (Delhi), prominent Khilafat and Congress leader; President Indian National Congress 1923; left Congress 1928; d. 1931.

Ali, Shaukat, b. 1873. Prominent Khilafat and Muslim League leader; served UP govt. 1896–1913; Member UP Leg. Assembly 1938; Member Muslim League Council 1936–8; d. 1938.

Ali, Syed Ameer, b. 1849; ed. Calcutta, Inner Temple; Member, Bengal Leg. Council 1878–83; of Imperial Leg. Council 1883–5; High Court Judge 1890–1904; founder Secretary National Mohammedan Association 1876–1904; d. 1928.

Andrews, C.F., b. 1871; British author and reformer; joined Cambridge brotherhood in Delhi; close ally of Gandhi; d. 1940.

Ansari, Dr Mukhtar Ahmad, b. 1880; ed. Benares, Allahabad, Hyderabad; doctor in Charing Cross Hospital London 1901; began practice in Delhi 1910; led Medical Mission to Turkey 1912–13; Khilafat Movement 1920–2; President Indian National Congress 1927; founder All India Muslim Nationalist Party 1929; d. 1936.

Attlee, Clement Richard, First Earl, b. 1883, Labour MP 1922–55; parliamentary private secretary to Ramsay MacDonald 1920–4; Under-Secretary for War 1924; Member Indian Statutory Commission 1927–30; elected leader of the Labour Party 1935; Dy. Prime Minister in the War Cabinet of Winston Churchill 1942–5; Prime Minister 1945–51; created Earl 1955; d. 1967.

Azad, Maulana Abul Kalam, b. 1888; author, journalist, prominent Indian politician, President Indian National Congress 1923, 1939–46; Education Minister in Nehru Cabinet 1947–58; d. 1958.

Baldwin, Stanley, First Earl Baldwin of Bewdley, b. 1867, Conservative MP 1908–37; Jt. Financial Secretary to the Treasury 1917–21; President. Board of Trade 1921–2; Chancellor of Exchequer 1922–3; Prime Minister 1923–4, 1924–9; 1935–7; Lord President of the Council in the National Govt. 1931–5; Resigned 1937; d. 1947.

Besant, Annie Wood, b. 1847; came to India in 1893; President, Theosophical Society 1907–33; President, Indian National Congress 1917; d. 1933.

Bevan, Aneurin, b. 1897; Labour MP 1929–60; Minister of Health 1945–51; Minister of Labour 1951; Dy. Leader Labour Party 1959–60; d. 1960.

Birkenhead, First Earl of (F.C. Smith), b. 1872, Conservative MP 1906–18; Attorney-General 1915–19; Lord Chancellor 1919–22; Secretary of State for India 1924–8; d. 1930.

Bonnerjee, W.C., b. 1844; Calcutta lawyer; President Indian National Congress 1885, 1892; Member Bengal Leg. Council 1893; later settled in England.

Bose, Subhas Chandra, b. 1897; passed Indian Civil Service 1921 but resigned; joined Non-Cooperation Movement 1921–2; Civil Disobedience Movement 1930–4; President, Indian National Congress 1938, 1939; escaped to Kabul 1941, then on to Germany 1942; collaborated with the Japanese 1943 and formed Indian National Army 1943–5; d. 1945.

Burke, Edmund, b. 1729; Irish author, orator and statesman; MP from 1766; attacked Warren Hastings' Indian administration; published in 1790 *Reflections on the Revolution in France*; d. 1797.

Butler, Spencer Harcourt, b. 1869; Dy. Commr. Lucknow 1906–7; Member Governor-General's Council 1910–15; Governor UP 1920–3; d. 1938.

Chagla, Mahomad Ali Currim, b. 1900; ed. Bombay, Oxford; President Oxford India Majlis 1922; called to the Bar 1922; Secretary Muslim League till 1928; Judge Bombay High Court 1941–7; Chief Justice 1947; Vice-Chancellor Bombay University 1947; Minister of Education, later of Foreign Affairs in Nehru's Cabinet; d.1981.

Chamberlain, (Arthur) Neville, b. 1869; Conservative MP, Birmingham 1918–29; Edgbaston 1929–40; Chancellor of Exchequer 1923–4; 1931–7; Prime Minister 1937–40; resigned 1940 and retired from politics; d. 1940.

Chatterji, Bankim Chandra, b. 1838; Dy. Magistrate 1858 and rose to be Assistant Secretary to Bengal Govt.; man of letters; his novel, *Ananda Math* (1882) was hailed as bible of Indian nationalism in which the song, *Bande Mataram*, appeared; d. 1894.

Chelmsford, First Viscount (F.J.N. Thesiger), b. 1868; Governor of Queensland 1905–9, of New South Wales 1909–13; Governor-General of India 1916–21; First Lord of Admiralty 1924; d. 1933.

Chintamani, C.Y., b. 1880; editor, *Leader* (Allahabad); Member United Provinces Leg. Council 1916–23, 1927–36; Minister United Provinces Govt. 1921–3; President National Liberal Federation of India 1920, 1931; d. 1941.

Chirol, Valentine, b. 1852; British journalist, author, in charge of *The Times* foreign department 1896–1912; visited India seventeen times; Member Indian Public Services Commission 1912–14; d. 1929.

Chundrikar, I.I., b. 1897; Lawyer; Member Bombay Leg. Council 1937; President Bombay Province Muslim League 1940–5; Commerce Minister, Interim Govt. Delhi 1946–7; Governor NWFP 1950–1, of Punjab 1951–3; Pakistan Minister 1955–6; Prime Minister of Pakistan, Oct.–Dec. 1957; d. 1960.

Churchill, Sir Winston Leonard Spenser, b. 1874; Conservative MP 1900–4; Liberal MP 1906–8; Dundee 1908–22; Conservative MP 1924–45, from Woodford 1945–64; Under-Secretary for Colonies 1906–8; President Board of Trade 1908–10; Home Secretary 1910–11; First Lord of Admiralty 1911–15; Minister of Munitions 1917; Secretary of State for War 1919–21; Colonial Secretary 1921–2; Chancellor of Exchequer 1924–9; First Lord of Admiralty 1939–40; Prime Minister of Britain 1940–5, 1951–5; awarded Nobel Prize for literature 1953; d. 1965.

Coupland, Reginald, b. 1884; Beit Professor at Oxford; author of many books, considered a leading authority on Indian constitutional reforms; assisted Cripps in his mission to India in 1942; d. 1952.

Cripps, Stafford, b. 1889; Solicitor-General in Labour Govt. 1930–1; British Ambassador to Moscow 1940–2; Minister in Churchill's War Cabinet 1942–3; President Board of Trade in the Labour Govt 1945–7; Chancellor of Exchequer 1947–50; d. 1952.

Curzon, George Nathaniel, First Marquis Curzon of Kedleston, b. 1859; Under-Secretary for India 1891–2; Governor-General of India 1898–1905; Lord President of Council and Member of War Cabinet 1916–18; Foreign Secretary 1919–24; d. 1925.

Das, C.R., b. 1870; prominent Calcutta lawyer; President Indian National Congress 1921; formed with Motilal Nehru, Swaraj Party 1923; d. 1925.

Dyer, Reginald Edward Harry, b. 1864; Brigadier-General; responsible for Amritsar massacre 13 April 1919; d. 1927.

Eden, Sir (Robert) Anthony, First Earl of Avon, b. 1897; Conservative MP 1925–57; Under-Secretary, Foreign Office 1931–3; Lord Privy Seal 1934–5; Foreign Secretary 1935–8, 1940–5, 1951–5; Secretary for War 1940; Prime Minister 1955–7; Known for the ill-fated invasion of Suez in 1956; d. 1977.

Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand, b. 1869; called to the Bar 1889; went to South Africa 1893; launched agitation against apartheid; returned to India 1915; leading figure of Indian National Congress till his assassination in 1948.

Ghose, Aurobindo, b. 1872; passed written I.C.S. examination but did not take riding test 1890; teacher at Baroda 1893–1906; leader of Bengali extremists 1906–10; retired to Pondicherry in 1910 and devoted himself to spiritualism; d. 1950.

Gokhale, Gopal Krishna, b. 1866; teacher, journalist at Poona; Member Bombay Leg. Council 1899–1901 and of Imperial Leg. Council 1901–15; President Indian National Congress 1905; d. 1915.

Haig, Sir Harry Graham, b. 1881; ed. Oxford; entered ICS UP Cadre 1904; Secretary, Indian Fiscal Commission 1921–2; PS to Governor-General 1925; Home Secretary Govt. of India 1926–30; Home Member Govt. of India 1932–4; Governor UP 1934–9; Regional Commissioner for Civil Defence, UK 1940–5; d. 1956.

Hailey, Sir William Malcolm, b. 1872; ed. Oxford; entered ICS Punjab cadre 1895; Chief Commissioner Delhi 1912–18; Finance Member, Govt. of India 1919–22; Home Member Govt. of India 1922–4; Governor of Punjab 1924–8; Governor of UP 1928–34; Director, African Research Survey 1935–8; created Lord Hailey of Shahpur and Newport Pagnell 1936; d. 1969.

Halifax, First Earl of, Edward Frederick Lindley Wood, 1st Baron, Irwin, b. 1881; Conservative MP 1910–25; Viceroy of India 1926–31; Lord President of the Council 1937–8; Foreign Secretary 1938–40; Ambassador to USA 1941–6; d. 1959.

Hallett, Sir Maurice Garnier, b. 1883; ed. Oxford; entered ICS Bihar & Orissa Cadre, 1907; Chief Secretary Bihar & Orissa 1930–2; Home Secretary Govt. of India 1932–6; Governor of Bihar 1937–9; Governor of UP 1939–45; d. 1969.

Hamidulla, Nawab, of Bhopal, b. 1894; Chancellor Aligarh Muslim University 1930–5; Chancellor Chamber of Princes, 1931–2, 1944–7; attended first and second Round Table Conferences; d. 1960.

Haroon, Sir Abdoola, b. 1872/3; Businessman; joined Congress 1917; participated Khilafat & Non-Cooperation Movement 1919–22; President Sind Provincial Muslim League 1920, 1939; Member Bombay Leg. Assembly 1923; Central Leg. Assembly 1926–42; d. 1942.

Horniman, Benjamin Guy, b. 1871(?); British journalist; editor *Bombay Chronicle* 1913– and *The Bombay Sentinel* 1933–45; d. 1948.

Harris, Sir Arthur Travers, First Baronet, b. 1892; a major advocate of offensive air power before 1939; became head of Bomber Command in February 1942 and remained there until the end of the War where he gained fame as 'Bomber Harris'; d. 1984.

Hasan, Syed Wazir, b. 1874; lawyer of Lucknow; Secretary Muslim League 1912–19; Chief Judge of Avadh Chief Court 1930–4; President Muslim League 1936; joined Indian National Congress 1938; d. 1947.

Hastings, Warren, b. 1732; First Governor-General of India 1773–85; d. 1818.

Henderson, Arthur, b. 1863; Labour MP 1903–31, 1933–5; President Board of Education 1915–16; Minister of War Cabinet 1916–17; Home Secretary 1924; Foreign Secretary 1929–31; d. 1935.

Hoare, Sir Samuel John Gurney, b. 1880; ed. Harrow, Oxford; Conservative MP for Chelsea 1910–44; Secretary for State for Air 1922–4; 1924–9, 1940; Secretary of State for India 1931–5; First Lord of the Admiralty 1936–7; Ambassador to Spain 1940–4; Created Lord Templewood 1944; d. 1959.

Husain, Dr Zakir, b. 1897; established Jamia Millia Islamia; Vice-Chancellor 1926–48; Chairman National Committee on Basic Education and Vidya Mandir Scheme 1937–8; Vice-Chancellor Aligarh Muslim University 1948; Governor of Bihar 1957; Vice-President of India 1962–7; President of India 1967–9; d. 1969.

Husain, Mian Sir Fazli, b. 1877; ed. Lahore, Cambridge; called to the Bar 1901; lawyer 1901–20; Member Punjab Leg. Council 1920, 1923; Minister Punjab Government 1921–5, 1936; founded and led Punjab National Unionist Party 1923–36; Member G.G's Exe. Council 1925, 1929, 1933–5; d. 1936.

Imam, Sir Syed Ali, b. 1869; ed. Patna, London; called to the Bar 1890; President Muslim League 1908; Member G.G's Council 1910–15; Judge Patna High Court 1917; President Nizam's Exe. Council 1919–22 and later Prime Minister to Nizam of Hyderabad; d. 1933.

Iqbal, Dr Sir Muhammad, b. 1876; ed. Lahore, Cambridge; barrister, poet, philosopher; Professor of Arabic, London University 1908; President Muslim League 1930; Member Punjab Leg. Council 1926–30; d. 1938.

Ispahani, Mirza Abul Hasan, b. 1902; ed. Cambridge; called to the Bar 1924; Member Bengal Leg. Assembly 1937–47; Member Muslim League Working Committee 1941–7; Pakistani Ambassador to US 1947–52; to UK 1952–4; Central Minister 1954–5; d. 1981.

Jamshed, Nusserwanji, b. 1886; a close friend of Jinnah, philanthropist and social worker, Mayor of Karachi 1922–34; Member Sind Leg. Assembly but resigned 1940; d. 1952.

Jayakar, M.R., b. 1873; called to the Bar 1901; Liberal leader; later joined Hindu Mahasabha; Home Rule League 1917–20; Member Bombay Leg. Council 1923; Swaraj Party Leader Bombay 1923–5; RTC 1930–2; Judge Indian Federal Court 1937–9; Member Judicial Committee of the Privy Council 1939–42; Member Constituent Assembly 1946; Vice-Chancellor Bombay University 1948–9; d. 1959.

Jinnah, Mohammad Ali, b. 1876; called to the Bar 1896; President All India Muslim League 1916, 1920, and from 1934 until his death; considered creator of Pakistan; Governor-General of Pakistan 1947–8; d. 1948.

Khaliquzzaman, Chaudhry, b. 1889; lawyer, prominent politician of UP; Member UP Leg. Assembly 1930, 1937, 1946; Member Indian Constituent Assembly; migrated to Pakistan 1947; Governor East Pakistan 1953–4; d. 1973.

Khan, Hakim Ajmal, b. 1863; Trustee of Aligarh College; President Muslim League 1919; Chancellor Jamia Millia Islamia 1920; President All India Khilafat Conference and Indian National Congress 1921; joined Swarajist 1923; d. 1927.

Khan, Iftikhar Husain, Nawab of Mamdot, b. 1905; Member Punjab Leg. Assembly 1946; Chief Minister Punjab (Pakistan) 1947–9; Governor of Sind 1954–5; d. 1969.

Khan, Maulana Zafar Ali, b. 1873; poet, journalist, politician, edited *Zamindar*, Lahore; joined khilafat and Non-Cooperation Movements 1920–2; participated in Civil Disobedience Movement 1930–1; joined Muslim League 1937; Member Punjab Leg. Council 1937–46; Member Central Leg. Assembly 1946; d. 1956.

Khan, Mohammad Ismail, Nawab, b. 1886; Muslim League leader from Meerut UP but remained in India after partition; ed. Cambridge, London; Member UP Leg. Council 1924–6; Vice-Chancellor Aligarh University 1934–5, 1947–8; Member Indian Constituent Assembly; d. 1958.

Khan, Raja Ghazanafar Ali, b. 1895; Member Imperial Leg. Assembly 1923; of Council 1933–7; Member Punjab Leg. Assembly 1937, 1946; Member Interim Govt. of India 1946–7; Minister Govt. of Pakistan 1947–8; Ambassador to Iran 1948; to India 1954; d. 1963.

Khan, Sir Khizr Hyat, Tiwana, b. 1900; staunch anti-League, Unionist Leader of Punjab; Punjab Minister 1937–42; Premier Punjab, Dec. 1942–6; Apr. 1946–Mar. 1947 as head of coalition govt; resigned March 1947; left for USA; d. 1975.

Khan, Sir Sikander Hyat, b. 1893; Leader Punjab National Unionist Party 1936–42; Member Punjab Leg. Council 1921, 1936; Prime Minister of

Bhawalpur State 1930; Dy. Governor Reserve Bank of India 1935; Premier of Punjab 1937–42; Acting Governor of Punjab 1942; d. 1942.

Khan, Sir Syed Ahmad, b. 1817; joined East India Company's Service 1837; retired as Subordinate Judge 1876; founded Muhammedan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh 1877; Member Imperial Leg. Council 1878–80; 1881–3; Knighted 1888; d. 1898.

Khuhro, Mohammad Ayub, b. 1901; prominent Sind politician; President Sind Azad Conference and Muslim Association of Sind 1928–35; Member Sind Leg. Assembly 1937–40, 1946–52, 1952–5; Member Muslim League 1939, 1947; Minister Sind Govt. 1940–1, 1942–4, 1946–7; Chief Minister of Sind 1947–8, 1951, 1954–5; d. 1980.

Kitchlew, Saifuddin, b. 1884; ed. England, Germany; started legal practice Rawalpindi 1913; moved to Amritsar 1915; leading part in Rowlatt Satyagraha, khilafat agitation, Non-Cooperation Movement; conducted *tenzim* campaign; d. 1963.

Lansbury, George, b. 1859; Labour MP 1910–12, 1922–40; Member of Labour Govt. 1929–31; Labour Party Leader 1932–5; editor, *Daily Herald*; pacifist and Christian Socialist; d. 1940.

Linlithgow, Second Marquess of (Victor Alexander John Hope), b. 1887; Vice-Chairman Conservative Party 1922–4; Chairman Royal Commission on Indian Agriculture 1926–8; Chairman Joint Select Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform 1933–4; Viceroy & Governor-General of India 1936–43; d. 1952.

Lloyd George, David, First Earl Lloyd-George of Dwytor, b. 1863; Liberal MP 1890–1945; President Board of Trade 1905–8; Chancellor of Exchequer 1908–15; Minister of Munitions 1915–16; Secretary of War 1916; Prime Minister 1916–22; Leader of the Liberal Party 1926–31; d. 1945.

Lothian, Philip Henry Kerr, 11th Marquess of, b. 1882; ed. Oxford; Editor *The Round Table* 1910–16; Secretary to the PM (Lloyd George) 1916–21; Parliamentary Under-Secretary for India 1931–2; Chairman India Franchise Commission 1932; Ambassador to USA 1939–40; d. 1940.

MacDonald (James) Ramsay, b. 1866; Labour MP (National Labour) 1931–7; Labour MP for Leicester 1906–18; Aberdeen 1922–9; for Seaham 1929–35; for Scottish Universities 1936–7; Leader, Labour Party 1922–31; Prime Minister 1924, 1929–31 and of the National Govt. 1931–5; Lord President of the Council 1935–7. His decision to form a 'National Government' and to campaign against the Labour Party in the ensuing election earned his expulsion from the party; d. 1937.

Macmillan, Harold, Earl Stockton, b. 1894; Conservative MP 1924–9, 1931–64; Minister of Housing and Local Govt. 1951–4; Minister of Defence 1954–5; Chancellor of Exchequer 1955–7; Prime Minister 1957–63; d. 1986.

Madani, Husain Ahmed, b. 1879; ed. Deoband; Principal Darul Ulum 1926–57; President, Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Hind; opposed two-nation theory and partition; d. 1957.

Mashriqi, Allana Inayatullah Khan, b. 1888; founder of the Khaksar movement 1930; joined Indian Education Service, rose to be under-secretary 1916; influenced by Hitler and Mussolini, imprisoned on numerous occasions; d. 1963.

Mehta, Pherozeshah Merwanji, b. 1845; ed. Elphinstone College; called to the Bar 1868; Member Bombay Leg. Council 1893; Elected member, Governor-General's Leg. Council 1893; President Indian National Congress, 1890; d. 1915.

Mohani, Hasrat, b. 1877; journalist, poet, politician; participated Khilafat and Non-Cooperation Movements 1921; President All India Muslim League 1921; joined Shaukat Ali against the Nehru Report; d. 1951.

Mohsin-ul-Mulk, Nawab Mehdi Ali Hasan, b. 1837; secretary Aligarh College 1898–1907; leading role in formation of Muslim League 1906; close associate of Sir Syed Ahmad 1874–93; Member Simla Deputation 1906; founder member Muslim League and Jt. Secretary Muslim League 1906–7; d. 1907.

Montagu, Edwin Samuel, b. 1879; Liberal MP 1906–22; author of Govt. of India Act 1919 known as Montagu–Chelmsford Reforms; Secretary of State for India 1917–22; d. 1925.

Moonje, Balakrishna Sheoram; b. 1872; doctor Nagpur; took part in Home Rule League; President Hindu Mahasabha 1927; d. 1948.

Mountbatten, First Earl, Lord Louis Mountbatten, b. 1900; Supreme Allied Commander in southeast Asia 1943–6; Viceroy of India 1947; Governor-General of India 1947–8; First Sea Lord 1955; Chief of Defence Staff 1959; assassinated by Irish extremists 1979.

Muhammad Ali Muhammad, Raja of Mahmudabad. b. 1879; Member Imperial Leg. Council 1904–9; of G.G.'s Council 1907–20; President Muslim League 1917–18, 1928; President British India Association (Oudh Taluqdars) 1917–21, 1930–1; Home Minister UP Govt. 1920–5; Vice-Chancellor Aligarh Muslim University 1920–3; d. 1931.

Naoroji, Dadabhai, b. 1828; Businessman, journalist and politician; started *Rast Goftar*, 1851; first Indian Member of British Parliament 1892–5; President Indian National Congress 1886, 1893, 1906; d. 1917.

Narayan, Jayaprakash, b. 1902; ed. Patna, Benares, Wisconsin, California 1922–9; Prof. of Sociology, BHU 1929; Acting General Secretary Indian National Congress 1932–3; General Secretary Congress Socialist Party 1934–9; imprisoned 1942–46; President Praja Socialist Party 1951–3; founder Bhoodan Movement 1953; led agitation against Indira Gandhi 1974–5; Founder Member Janata Party 1977; d. 1979.

Nehru, Jawaharlal, b. 1889; ed. Harrow & Cambridge, Bar-at-Law; man of letters and statesman; prominent leader of Indian national movement; President Indian National Congress 1929, 1936, 1937, 1946, 1951–4; imprisoned many times – nine years in jail; Prime Minister of India 1947–64; d. 1964.

Nehru, Motilal, b. 1861; leading UP lawyer; President, UP Congress Provincial Conference 1907; Member UP Leg. Council 1910–19; President Indian National Congress 1919, 1928; participated in Non-Cooperation and Civil Disobedience Movements; imprisoned twice; leader, Swaraj Party's Member Imperial Leg. Council 1923–6; Chairman Nehru Committee to draft Constitution 1928; d. 1931.

Nishtar, Sardar Abdur Rab Khan, b. 1899; prominent NWFP leader; Member Indian National Congress 1927–31; Member Muslim League 1936; Member Leg. Assembly 1937–41; Finance Minister NWFP 1943–5; Minister Interim Govt. of India 1946–7; Governor of Punjab (Pakistan) 1949–51; d. 1958.

O'Dyer, Sir Michael, Governor of Punjab 1917–20; enforced martial law in Punjab 1919, crawling order, etc.; shot dead by an Indian in London in 1940.

Pant, Govind Ballabh, b. 1887; lawyer; Member UP Leg. Council 1912–19; participated in Non-Cooperation 1920–2; Civil Disobedience 1930–1; Individual Satyagraha 1940–1; Quit India Movement 1942; UP Leg. Council Swaraj Party leader 1923–8; Dy. Leader Congress Party Central Leg. Assembly 1934–7; Chief Minister UP 1937–9, 1946–54; Home Minister Govt. of India 1955–61; d. 1961.

Patel, Sardar Vallabhbhai, b. 1875; lawyer, prominent Congress politician and leader; participated in all Congress-led movements 1917, 1920–2, 1930–4, and imprisoned; President Indian National Congress 1931; Dy. Prime Minister of India 1947–50; designated iron man of India; d. 1950.

Pethick-Lawrence, Sir Frederick William, Lord First Baron, b. 1871; Labour Party leader; Member Women's Suffrage movement; Finance Secretary to the Treasury 1929–31; led the Cabinet mission to India 1946; Secretary of State for India and Burma 1945–7; d. 1961.

Prasad, Rajendra, b. 1884; lawyer politician at Patna; President Indian National Congress 1934, 1939; participated in all Congress-led movements, imprisoned many times; President Indian Constituent Assembly 1946–50; President of India 1950–62; d. 1963.

Rai, Lala Lajpat, b. 1865; ed. Lahore; practised Law; joined Indian National Congress 1888; founded Urdu daily *Bande Mataram* and English Weekly *The People*; President Calcutta Congress special session 1920; President Agra Provincial Conference 1928; hurt during the anti-Simon Commission agitation; d. 1928.

Rajagopalachari, Chakravarti, b. 1879; prosperous lawyer; participated in Rowlatt Satyagraha 1919; Non-Cooperation Movement 1920–2; Civil Disobedience Movement 1930–4; Chief Minister Madras 1937–9, 1952–5; Governor-General of India 1948–50; founded Swatantra Party 1959; d. 1972.

Ram, Sir Chhotu, b. 1881; private secretary to Raja Rampal Singh of Kalakankar UP; President District Congress committee Rohtak 1917–20; resigned Congress 1920 on non-cooperation; one of the founders of the Punjab Unionist Party; Member Punjab Leg. Council 1926–36; Minister Punjab Govt. 1940–45; d. 1945.

Ranade, M.G., b. 1842; entered Bombay Judicial Service 1871; author and social reformer; Member Bombay Leg. Council 1885–7, 1891–2; Judge Bombay High Court from 1893 until his death in 1901.

Rau, B.N., b. 1887; Indian civil servant and jurist; closely associated with V.P. Menon in drafting partition documents, etc.; d. 1953.

Saadullah, Sir Muhammad, b. 1886; Muslim League leader of Assam; Member Assam Leg. Assembly 1913–20, 1923; Minister Assam 1924–9; Premier 1937–42; member Governor-General's Council 1941; Member Indian Constituent Assembly 1947–9; d. 1950.

Sapru, Sir Tej Bahadur, b. 1875; prominent jurist; joined moderate Indian National Congress 1917; Member UP Leg. Council 1912–16; Member Imperial Leg. Council 1916–22; Law Member, Govt. of India 1920–2; Member Muddiman Reforms Enquiry Committee 1924; Member Nehru Committee 1928; President National Liberal Federation 1927; RTC 1930–2; President All Parties Conference 1941–5; d. 1949.

Shafi, Sir Mian Mohammad, b. 1869; ed. Lahore, London; called to the Bar 1892; Member Simla deputation 1906; Member Punjab Leg. Council, later of Imperial Leg. Council 1909–19; President All India Muslim League 1913, 1927; Member G.G's Exe. Council 1919–24; its Vice-President 1923–4; RTC 1930–1; d. 1932.

Siddiqui, Abdur Rahaman, Founder Member, Muslim League, b. 1957; Dacca but lived mostly in Aligarh and Delhi; Member All India Muslim League Working Committee 1906; close associate of Muhammad Ali and Dr Ansari; wrote for *Comrade* 1911; Editor, *Morning News* 1947–8; d. 1957.

Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, b. 1880; medical doctor, Congress leader; Gandhi's nominee against Subhas Bose for Congress Presidentship, 1938; was defeated; Member Indian Constituent Assembly 1946–50; President Indian National Congress 1948; d. 1959.

Smuts, Jan Christiaan, b. 1870; statesman, Prime Minister of South Africa 1919–24, 1939–48; d. 1950.

Suhrawardy, H.S., b. 1893; ed. Calcutta, Oxford; Member Bengal Leg. Assembly 1924–45; Minister in Bengal Govt. 1943–5; Chief Minister 1946; migrated to East Pakistan; joined Awami Muslim League in 1949 and routed Muslim League in 1954 election; Prime Minister of Pakistan 1957; forced to resign; arrested in 1962 and died in Beirut in mysterious circumstances.

Tagore, Rabindranath, b. 1861; poet, philosopher; awarded Nobel Prize for Literature 1913; d. 1941.

Tilak, Bal Gangadhar, b. 1856; teacher, journalist at Poona; wrote articles supporting Chapekar brothers who were found guilty of murdering an Englishman during anti-plague operations in Poona; tried and jailed for sedition 1897–8; sent to Mandalay jail in Burma 1908–14; prominent extremist leader causing split of the Indian National Congress in 1907; joined Home Rule League of Annie Besant after 1915; d. 1920.

Viqarul Mulk, Nawab Mustaq Husain, b. 1841; member Simla Deputation and chairman Muslim League session Dacca 1906.

Wacha, Dinshaw E., b. 1844; Businessman, journalist politician; President Indian National Congress 1901; d. 1936.

Wavell, Archibald Percival, First Earl Wavell, b. 1883; Commander-in-Chief, Middle East 1939–41; Commander-in-Chief, India 1941–3; Viceroy of India 1943–7; d. 1950.

Wedderburn, William, b. 1838; entered Indian Civil Service 1860; Judge Bombay High Court 1885; Offg. Chief Secretary Bombay Govt. 1886–7; MP 1893–1900; President Indian National Congress 1889, 1910; d. 1918.

Willingdon, Lord, Freeman Thomas, First Marquess of, b. 1866; Liberal MP 1900–10; Governor of Bombay 1913–19; of Madras 1919–24; Governor of Canada 1926–31; Governor-General of India 1931–6; d. 1941.

Wilson (James) Harold, b. 1916; Labour MP for Ormskirk 1945–50, for Huyton from 1950; President Board of Trade 1947–51; Elected leader of the Labour Party 1963; Prime Minister 1964–70, 1974–6; d. 1995.

Wilson (Thomas) Woodrow, b. 1856; President of USA 1913–21; d. 1924.

Yakub, Sir Muhammad, b. 1879; Barrister; Member UP Leg. Assembly 1924–38; President UP Muslim League 1926; President All India Muslim League 1927; Hon. Secretary All India Muslim League 1930–5; d. 1942.

Zafrullah Khan, Sir Muhammad, b. 1893; called to the Bar 1914; practised law 1914–35; Member Punjab Leg. Council 1926; RTC 1930, 32; President Muslim League 1931–2; Member G.G's Council 1932, 1935–41; Constitutional Adviser to Nawab of Bhopal 1947; Foreign Minister Pakistan 1947–54; Judge International Court of Justice, Hague 1954–61, 1964–70; d. 1985.

Zetland, Second Marquess of (Lawrence John Lumley Dundas), b. 1876; Conservative MP 1907–17; Governor of Bengal as Lord Ronaldshay 1917–22; Secretary of State for India 1935–40; d. 1951.

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Mountbatten Papers (on microfilm). IOR. Neg. 17441–51; IOR. Neg. 15564–7.
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Christie Papers. Mss. Eur. D. 718.
Francis Mudie Papers. Mss. Eur. F. 164.
George Cunningham Papers. Mss. Eur. D. 670.
Evan Jenkins Papers. Mss. Eur. D. 807.
Linlithgow Papers. Mss. Eur. F. 125 (part of the collection was consulted in London and the rest on microfilm in New Delhi).
Roger Lumley Papers. Mss. Eur. F. 253/44.
Maurice Hallett Papers. Mss. Eur. E. 251.
Fazli Husain Papers. Mss. Eur. E. 352.
Malcolm Hailey Papers. Mss. Eur. E. 220.
Malcolm Hailey Papers. Mss. Brit. Empire (S. 343, housed in Rhodes House, Oxford, was also consulted).
Penderel Moon Papers. Mss. Eur. F. 230.
Major Short Papers. Mss. Eur. F. 189.
Mss. Eur. C. 528. Transcript of BBC transmission of 1979 of Lord Mountbatten.
Mss. Eur. C. 357 A.D. and weekly correspondence between Earl Listowel and Lord Mountbatten.

Governors' papers

Fortnightly Reports of Sir Francis Wylie, Governor of UP 1945–47, are available in the British Intelligence Series opened for consultation.
IOR L/PJ/5/273–6 and IOR L/PJ/273 & 274. Reports of Sir Maurice Hallett's, Governor of UP.
R/3/1/176–7. Correspondence of Sir Evan Jenkins, Governor of Punjab 1947, relating to the Punjab situation.
R/3/1/178. Fortnightly reports sent by the Governor of Punjab to the Viceroy, January 1947 to August 1947.

Other papers

L/PJ/5/395. Record of Simla Conference 1945.
L/PJ/5/396. Report of the last Viceroy.
R/3/1/89. Punjab situation in February–August 1947.
R/3/1/90–91. Punjab and the Muslim League agitation.
R/3/1/109. Lord Wavell's breakdown plan.
R/3/1/171–74. Disturbances in the Punjab 1947.
IOR/L/PO/10/24. Wavell's weekly letters to the Secretary of State for India, January–March 1947.
IOR/L/PJ/12/644. Note by G.Ahmed Dy. Secretary GOI for Home Govt.
IOR/L/PJ/12/658. Scotland Yard report, 25 November 1942 to 1943.
IOR/L/PJ/12/652. OSS report 112 on Pakistan.
IOR/L/PJ/12/666. DIB report on voluntary organization in India 1946–47.
IOR/L/PO/6/102C. Nehru and Patel on communal disturbances in Bengal; interim government; Gandhi's view on Muslim League, etc.; SOS statement on self-government in India.
IOR/L/PO/10/21–4. Private and secret weekly letters between SOS and Viceroy, 1943 to 1947.
Mss. Eur. C. 587. Two draft letters from Pethick-Lawrence to Jinnah and Jawaharlal Nehru, 1946.
Mss. Eur. C. 625. Evan Jenkins's letter to Mountbatten, 28 March 1947.

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The Empire at Bay: The Leo Amery Diaries, 1929–1945, eds John Barnes and David Nichols (London: 1988).
Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal, ed. Penderel Moon (Delhi: 1977).
Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah Papers, editor-in-chief, Z.H. Zaidi, 5 vols (Islamabad: 1999–2001).
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Some Recent Speeches and Writings of Mr Jinnah, ed. Jamil-ud-din Ahmed, 2 vols (Lahore: 1942).
Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah: Studies in Interpretation, Sharif Al Mujahid (Karachi: 1981), appendices contain texts of Muslim League resolutions and important speeches of Jinnah.
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M.A. Jinnah-Ispahani Correspondence, 1936–1948, ed. Z.H. Zaidi (Karachi: 1976).
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Encyclopaedia of Religion, ed. Mircea Eliade.
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